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XII.—BEOWULF AND THE TRAGEDY OF FINNSBURG

If there were ever an occasion when, to paraphrase the words of Sir Benjamin Backbite, a neat rivulet of text might meander through a meadow of marginal annotation, the *Finnsburg Episode* would provide it. Hardly any passage in *Beowulf* has gathered to itself such a mass of exegesis. This is not surprising when we consider the highly allusive manner in which the story is told, the unusual words and idioms, and the corruptions of the text. In the *Finnsburg Fragment* the same obscurities and corruptions abound, and if the narrative itself is less broken and allusive, these textual difficulties and the loss of lines at the beginning and the end make its interpretation difficult. Unfortunately, many problems still remain to be settled; the labors of scholars have failed to bring agreement upon many important matters.

Under these circumstances, so familiar to all those who have studied *Beowulf* with care, a review of the whole much-disputed Finnsburg material seems, and is, a somewhat formidable undertaking. But the present article has a different aim from that of most criticisms on this subject; it is mainly concerned, not with the explanation of individual words or lines, but with the interpretation of the story as a whole. The chief end of the study of details is after all that the narrative itself may be better understood. We have to hold the book at arm's length occasionally in order to avoid the risk of regarding these passages merely as highly-annotated lines. The emphasis here, then, will be upon this broader view, although it will constantly be necessary to consider the minutiae of criticism, and in some cases to investigate disputed points afresh.

The larger outlines of the story seem, at the present time, to require some review and explanation. The original aim of the present paper was to discuss only certain special problems of interpretation. But decision in regard to any one passage is likely to depend upon the view taken of other passages, and of the personal and ethnographical relationships of the different characters. This involves so much cross-reference and explanation that it is almost simpler to give a review of the whole story. Such a review, taking due account of the latest investigations, is not, so far as the writer is aware, to be found in print at the time of writing.¹ While critics will differ as to the solution of these problems, it may be of service to have them restated, —occasionally, as in the vexed passage describing the events after Hengest and the Danes had spent the winter in Friesland with Finn, in some detail. A number of new suggestions are offered by the present writer, but no startling or revolutionary theories are proposed; the reader will rather find a modification of what may be called the traditional interpretation. Throughout, the attempt has been made to be conservative in argument and statement.²

¹ Since this investigation was undertaken, Professor Friedrich Klaeber read, at the meeting of the Central Division of the Modern Language Association of America, in December, 1914, a review of the Finnsburg Tale. The present paper was read by title at the corresponding meeting of the Eastern section of the Association. It is much to be hoped that Professor Klaeber's monograph may soon be published.

² It is no part of the design of the present paper to give an exhaustive bibliography of critical comments on the Finnsburg material. The advantages of such completeness are questionable; much of this criticism is valueless today. The history of opinion in regard to any vexed passage may be gained by reading the notes and consulting the bibliography suggested in an edition of *Beowulf* with full notes, like Schücking's revision of the Heyne-Socin text.

The necessity of basing general conclusions upon the unamended text, so far as this is possible, must be emphasized. By liberal conjectural emendation one may shape the interpretation to fit one's own fancies, making

It seems useless to reprint this here. References to special comments on disputed passages will be found in the appropriate places in the succeeding pages. The reader will find the following books and articles of especial value in determining the larger outlines of the story, and in deciding questions of ethnography and saga: Simrock, *Beowulf, das älteste deutsche Epos*, 1859, pp. 187-191; Müllenhoff, *Beowulf*, Berlin, 1889, pp. 105-107; *Nordalbingische Studien*, I, 157 ff.; Möller, *Das altenglische Volksepos*, Kiel, 1883 (proposes a radically different interpretation from that generally favored by earlier scholars, a book of great learning and ingenuity, but unsound in most of its conclusions); Heinzel, *Anzeiger für deutsches Altertum*, Vol. x, pp. 225 ff. (dissenting review of Möller); Bugge, Paul und Braune, *Beiträge*, Vol. xii, pp. 20-37 (reviews Möller, rejecting his interpretation, with much new criticism, a most important article); ten Brink, Paul's *Grundriss*, first ed., Vol. II, pp. 543 ff. (reprinted in ten Brink's *Geschichte der englischen Litteratur*, second ed., Strassburg, 1899, pp. 472-478, (an excellent survey; ten Brink did not accept the hypotheses of Möller); Koegel, *Geschichte der deutschen Litteratur*, Strassburg, 1894, Vol. I, pp. 163-169; Binz, Paul und Braune, *Beiträge*, Vol. xx, pp. 179 ff. (discusses traces of Germanic saga in place-names in the British Isles); Trautmann, *Finn und Hildebrand*, in *Bonner Beiträge* No. 7, 1903, see especially pp. 58-64 (an important work, chiefly concerned with textual criticism, with great freedom in conjectural emendation); Binz, review of Trautmann in *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie*, Vol. xxxvii, pp. 529 ff.; Boer, *Finnsage und Nibelungensage*, *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum*, Vol. XLVII, pp. 133 ff. (a suggestive comparison of the Finnsburg material with related or similar stories); R. Imelmann, *Deutsche Litteraturzeitung*, Vol. xxx, p. 999 (17 April, 1909); Brandl, Paul's *Grundriss* (second edition), 1908, Vol. II, pp. 983-1024 (an important and highly condensed review with full bibliography). Critical comments in the various standard translations of *Beowulf* may be consulted to advantage. Dr. R. W. Chambers's edition of *Widsith*, Cambridge, 1912, gives an admirable introduction to the general background of early legend and ethnography in Germanic poetry. The text of *Beowulf* used in the present investigation is that of Heyne and Socin, revised by Schücking, tenth edition, Paderborn, 1913.

a very pretty poem, but not *Beowulf*. Much mischief has already been done by unnecessary alterations. Upon them have sometimes been built most elaborate theories, which, if true, would be of far-reaching significance. Thus a well-known English scholar has recently conjecturally identified the Hengest of the present poem with the Hengest traditionally associated with Horsa, upon the basis of a textual emendation which was both unnecessary and unidiomatic, but which was widely adopted in early editions of *Beowulf*.³ His whole argument depends upon this emendation; it falls to the ground if the reading of the manuscript, which gives perfect sense, be retained. Emendation is, in the present state of the text, sometimes inevitable, but it should in most cases be the editor's last resort, and conclusions depending upon it should be treated as hypothetical. It is gratifying to note that the general trend of modern text-criticism is towards greater conservatism, rather than greater license.

These much-discussed lines deserve all the patient care which scholars have lavished upon them, since they present not only the fascination of an enigma, but the enduring charm of great poetry. The Finnsburg story is one of the most dramatic in the whole literature of the Heroic Age. It is far superior to the main subject-matter of *Beowulf*, if human passions and human struggles are more fitting subjects for epic than contests with demons and dragons. The two versions which have been preserved are, as has often been noted, most striking examples of epic and lay technic. The *Episode* is retrospective and elegiac, at once revealing the outlines of a long story, and emphasizing its more dramatic and pathetic moments. The *Fragment*, on the other hand, is sharp as an etching,

³ See p. 415, note 2 below.

rapid of movement, brisk of dialog, concerned only with the moment. The moonlight gleams upon the weapons of the advancing warriors, there is a swift alarm, taunts and defiance are exchanged, and the battle is on. The whole tale of strife and bloodshed in the halls of King Finn is called by the *Beowulf*-poet *heal-gamen*,—a thing well suited to please the champions at Hrothgar's feast. If the terrible revenge meted out to the enemies of the Danes does not give us the same savage joy today, the passion and pathos of the story have not lost their charm with the passing of years.

I

THE SORROWS OF HILDEBURG

The *Finnsburg Episode* tells of hatred and violence, of injury and insult atoned for in sorrow and slaughter. But there is also a place for the tragedy of an innocent victim of the struggle,—the unhappy Queen Hildeburg. The emphasis upon her sufferings gives the beginning of the *Episode* an elegiac note, which recurs later on, in the passage describing her lamentations at the funeral pyre upon which lie the bodies of her brother and her son. An examination of the significance of the figure of Hildeburg in this story, and a consideration of other stories similar to this, will serve to indicate the general type to which the tale of Finnsburg belongs, and prepare the way for the subsequent investigation of other matters.

The main outlines of the situation at the opening of the narrative are fairly clear. Whatever view is taken of other circumstances, so much seems certain: Hildeburg, a princess of the Hocings, a tribe allied with or forming a component part of the Danes, is the queen of

Finn, king of the Frisians. A conflict, the result of treachery, breaks out at her husband's court between her kinsmen, led by her brother Hnæf, and her husband's men. In this conflict Hnæf and a son of Hildeburg are killed.⁴ The queen is thus torn between affection for her husband and her son, and for her brother; for her adopted people on the one hand, and for her kinsmen and countrymen on the other. On whichever side she arrays herself, she will be guilty of disloyalty to those to whom she is bound by affection and by ties of family. This tragic situation was, we may be sure, not uncommon in actual fact in early days. Often a queen was given in marriage as a means of healing enmities between hostile peoples. One of the regular epithets of a queen in Anglo-Saxon poetry is *freoƿuwebbe*, "weaver of peace," used by Widsith of Ealhild, the princess who, according to his tale, married Eormanric the Goth.⁵ But often the smoldering fires of ancient hatred or of newly kindled passion were too

Hildeburg is the daughter of Hoc (1076); Hnæf is prince of the Hocings (*Widsith* 29). Hnæf and his men are referred to as Danes 1108 (cf. 1114), (1069 is ambiguous) 1090 (cf. 1158). Hildeburg is nowhere stated to be the wife of Finn, but there can be no doubt of this; she is called *cwēn*, a term only applied to queens in Beowulf, and Finn is the only *cyning* save Hnæf (*Fragment* 2 cannot refer to Hengest, see below). The carrying off of Hildeburg at the end of the story, with the treasures of Finn, suggests that she was his queen; compare the experiences of Ongentheow's consort. See for an outline of events in the story, Trautmann, *Finn und Hildebrand*, pp. 59 ff. That treachery was at work in causing the fight between the men of Hnæf and of Finn seems clear from the statement that Hildeburg "could not praise the good faith of the Eotenas" 1071, which of course means that she had good cause to blame their treachery (cf. Schuchardt, *Die Negation in Beowulf*, Berlin, 1910, p. 70).

⁵ See discussion of this word by the present writer in *Modern Philology*, Vol. IV (1906), p. 350; also by R. W. Chambers, *Widsith*, pp. 21-28.

strong, and strife broke out between the very peoples whom the queen was to unite in bonds of love.

The frequency with which this tragic situation appears in early poetry accounts for its presence here. We cannot be absolutely certain that Hildeburg was given to Finn to cement peace between her people and his, but it should be remembered that this is antecedently very likely, as the Danes and Frisians were ancient enemies. Siebs says,⁶ "During the Middle Ages, to the end of the eleventh century, the Danes were the worst foes of the Frisians, and through their depredations on their coasts were in constant conflict with them." Probably the ill-feeling between Danes and Frisians revealed in the tale of Finnsburg was of long standing. The whole story appears to belong to a type which may be reduced to its simplest form somewhat as follows: Two peoples are united by a royal marriage. But this era of peace is broken by an attack upon one of the queen's countrymen, or upon a band of her countrymen, while at her husband's court. In the midst of the conflict the figure of the queen, who is tortured by conflicting duties and emotions, stands out full of tragic pathos. The causes of the quarrel vary: an ancient feud, a real or a fancied insult, the avarice or ambition that overrides the keeping of pledges.

It will be instructive to review briefly episodes of this general character in early story, especially those in *Beowulf* itself and those which must have been familiar to the audience for which that poem was composed, to note the motivation which underlies these episodes, and to observe the moments of the action which poets have chosen to make especially prominent. One might, indeed, make a very pretty collection of such incidents in the

⁶ Paul's *Grundriss*, (second edition), Vol. II, p. 524.

manner of Boccaccio, a kind of *De Casibus Feminarum Illustrium* of the Heroic Age. A few *exempla* must suffice here.⁷

One of these unhappy ladies is Hrothgar's own daughter Freawaru, betrothed to Ingeld, prince of the Heathobards, a people with whom the Danes had previously been at war. Upon his return to the court of Hygelac, Beowulf speaks of Freawaru as having carried the ale-flagon to the nobles of Hrothgar at the banquet, and as having dispensed treasure in the hall. She was, then, in all likelihood, one of the company who had listened to the minstrel's tale of King Finn, and she might have seen in the misfortunes of Queen Hildeburg a forecast of her own future.⁸ For, says Beowulf,

2024

She is betrothed,

Young and gold-adorned, to the gracious son of Froda.
It hath seemed good to the friend of the Scyldings,
Shepherd of the people, and he accounteth it policy,
To lessen by her marriage⁹ a deal of deadly feuds,
Of contests.

The fatal danger of this "policy" is all too well realized by Beowulf; he knows that revenge for blood-spilling is stronger than oaths of peace or the gracious presence of a queen.

2029

Rarely anywhere

After the death of a warrior¹⁰ is for a little time
The murderous spear lowered, though the bride be fair!

⁷ For a review of earlier interpretations of the Finnsburg-story, see Boer, *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum*, Vol. XLVII, pp. 148 ff. Boer sees the closest analogy in the second part of the Nibelungen-saga.

⁸ See below, p. 380, note 11.

⁹ Literally, "by the woman."

¹⁰ *Leod-hryre* may also mean "people-death," the slaying of warriors, but I prefer the rendering "death of a prince," as in 2391.

These words may well serve as the *leit-motif* not only of this story, but of the whole group of stories with which we are here dealing. Beowulf sketches, in pursuance of this thought, the train of events after Freawaru shall have gone to live at the Heathobard court. It may well be an annoyance to the Heathobards, he says, to see a thane in the retinue of Freawaru wearing spoils taken in the past from a Heathobard warrior, and trouble will follow. The *Beowulf*-poet here violates the propriety of strict logic in making his hero outline the well-known story of Ingeld and Freawaru, which must be supposed to be subsequent to Beowulf's visit to Hrothgar.¹¹ The poet himself often

Here it would refer to the death of Froda, Ingeld's father. According to Saxo Grammaticus, Bk. vi, Froda was killed by the father of his son's wife. Saxo, however, tells the story in so late and altered a form that we must draw conclusions from him as to the earlier form of the story with great reserve. As Olrik points out (*Danmarks Heltedigtning*, Vol. II, p. 38), this does not necessarily refer to the death of Froda, since in the form of the story represented in *Beowulf* the revenge is of a young Heathobard warrior for his father. The transference of the revenge to Ingeld belongs to a later form of the tale. The "young warrior" (2044) can hardly be Ingeld; the old hero addresses him (2047) as *mīn wine*, too familiar for a retainer to his king, and the avenger (*sē ð̄er* 2061) escapes from Ingeld's court, whereupon the king feels his anger rise and his love for his wife diminish. In Saxo, however, Ingeld is the avenger.

¹¹ Olrik, in his very thorough and suggestive discussion of the Ingeld-story (*Danmarks Heltedigtning*, Vol. II, pp. 37 ff.), says: "I must utter a warning against the very common but very meaningless assertion that what Beowulf relates in the Danish royal court at this point is not a narrative of what has already happened, but a prophecy of future events." His view of the situation is that Freawaru had already had these experiences at the court of Ingeld—the slaying of her thane, and the loss of her husband's love—and had "either been cast off or had returned home of her own accord (*selv*)" (p. 38).

I cannot agree with Olrik. 1) The tenses referring to Hrothgar's plans, *hafað þæs geworden* (2026), where according to O.'s view we

gives us glimpses of the future, as in regard to the burning of the hall Heorot (83-85), or the future troubles in the Danish royal house, and he utilizes the present opportunity for reference to the tragic outcome of the feuds between Danes and Heathobards. An old Heathobard warrior "eggs on" to revenge the son of the man whose armor Freawaru's thane is wearing; the thane is killed, but the murderer escapes, because he knows the land well. Then Ingeld's love for his wife grows cool, and hatred against the Danes begins to rage in his breast (*weallað wæl-nīðas*). And so, says Beowulf, foreseeing such trou-

should expect the pluperfect, and *talað* (2027), where we should expect the preterit or the perfect, are contrary to this hypothesis. O. does actually translate the second of these phrases, incorrectly, as "har fundet det raadeligt," which makes the sense better accord with his view. If these sad events at Ingeld's court had already taken place, moreover, Hrothgar's notions about the excellence of his "policy" would probably be somewhat modified! 2) Against O.'s view are the tenses in Beowulf's narrative, which opens with *mæg þæs þonne ofþyncan* (2032), a clear reference to future time, and continues throughout in the present tense, frequently equivalent in Anglo-Saxon to the future, of course. Moreover, there is, I think, no other long passage in the poem in which the "historical present" is used in relating past events, as O. assumes to be the case here. 3) It would hardly be natural for Beowulf to say, even in view of Anglo-Saxon fondness for understatement, that he does not consider the good faith of the Heathobards sincere and their friendship firm, if Ingeld had already lost his love for Freawaru and caused her to return to her father's court, if he was already feeling "slaughterous enmity," and if the oaths of peace had already been broken on both sides (2063).

Moreover, this prophetic glimpse into the future is in entire accord with the peculiarities of Anglo-Saxon epic technic. Cf. *Beowulf* 83 ff.; 1240 ff.; 3021 ff., and see Hart, *Ballad and Epic*, Boston, 1907; and Klaeber, *Archiv*, Vol. CXXVI, pp. 46-47, where many bibliographical references to this stylistic habit are noted. Klaeber calls particular attention to a similar peculiarity in the *Aeneid*. There is at all events no need of viewing with suspicion Beowulf's temporary excursion into vaticination.

ble as this, "I do not account the good faith of the Heathobards to the Danes sincere."

In much this strain Hrothgar's poet speaks in the lay of Finn.

- 1071 Surely Hildeburg could not praise
 The good faith of the Eotenas; innocent,
 Was she bereaved of her dear ones in the play of shields,
 Of her son and brother.

So far as the woman is concerned, the general situation underlying both stories is much the same. How famous was the story of Ingeld is shown by the references elsewhere in *Beowulf* and in *Widsith*, also by its elaborate though distorted form in Saxo, and by the well-known letter of Alcuin, in which he laments that men are fonder of hearing about Ingeld than about Christ,—“Quid Hinieldus cum Christo?”

Other striking parallels will occur immediately to the reader, and have already been pointed out by scholars. In the *Volsungasaga*,¹² Signy, the daughter of King Volsung and sister of Sigmund, is wedded to King Siggeir of Gothland, who, to avenge what he considers an insult on the part of Sigmund, invites Volsung and his sons to visit him in his own land at the end of three months' time after the wedding festivities. The invitation is accepted; Volsung and his men come to Siggeir's court. The unhappy queen, realizing that treachery is afoot, comes out to meet her father and brothers, and implores them to return. But Volsung scorns to be thought a coward; he will neither go back nor allow his daughter to leave her husband, despite her tears. "Thou shalt

¹² Ed. Ranisch, Berlin, 1891; German translation by Edzardi, Stuttgart, 1881; English translation by Magnússon and Morris (no date).

certainly go home to thy husband and dwell with him, howsoever it fare with us." At daybreak the next morning Volsung and his warriors land, in armor, and are attacked and most of them slain by the forces of King Siggeir. Throughout the narrative it is Signy who engages the chief attention, down to her death with Siggeir in the flames of the burning hall,—one of the greatest scenes in Germanic poetry. With her brother Sigmund and their child Sinfjotli she takes a dreadful revenge upon Siggeir, burning him and his warriors to death.

Even more familiar is the tale of the marriage of Gudrun, the widow of Sigurd, to Atli, King of the Huns, of his treacherous invitation to her kinsmen to visit his court, of their death at his hands, and of Gudrun's revenge. The Scandinavian version, as represented in the *Poetic Edda*,¹³ is to be preferred to the narrative of the *Nibelungenlied*, since it represents an earlier form of the story. The motive of Atli is desire of the great Nibelung Hoard, in the possession of Gudrun's brothers. Gudrun's consent to the marriage is gained by a drink of forgetfulness given her by Grimhild, the mother of Atli, who is wise in magic. Gudrun's kinsmen are treacherously invited to the Hunnish court, their men are cut down by Atli's warriors, Hogni's heart is cut from his living body, and Gunnar is thrown into a den of serpents. For the death of her kinsmen Gudrun takes a dreadful revenge, in putting her two sons by Atli to death, and in giving him their blood to drink and their hearts to eat. Finally she kills Atli himself, and setting fire to the hall,

¹³ Cf. *Guðrúnarkviða II*; *Atlakviða*; *Atlamál*. German translations by Gering, Leipzig and Vienna (no date); and by Genzmer, with notes by Heusler, Diederichs, Jena, 1914. There is at present no modern English translation of this portion of the Edda which is easily accessible (1914).

perishes in the flames.¹⁴ Here, as in the story of Signy, the woman is loyal to her kin rather than to her husband. We do not learn how Hildeburg and Freawaru decided; their helpless figures are lost in the dark deeds about them. In the Nibelung tale there is no antecedent feud to explain the quarrel, as in the Freawaru-Ingeld story; no rankling insult as in the *Volsungasaga*; it is a case of treacherous violation of hospitality through greed for gold. But it is noticeable in all these stories that the immediate injury, the initiation of hostilities, comes, not from the kinsmen of the queen, but from her husband or his retainers.¹⁵

In these tales no figure commands more interest, either for the ancient poet or for the modern reader, than the unhappy woman married to the foreign king. The episode in which Beowulf tells the story of Ingeld is apparently introduced to make more effective and pathetic the mention of the lovely Danish princess Freawaru. In the story of Finn, as told in the *Episode*, no character is more individualized or prominent than Hildeburg. Finn is only the conventional king and leader; the poet wastes no time in making him seem real or in describing his

¹⁴ In other lays, of course, her fortunes are different; cf. *Gub-rúnarkvot*.

¹⁵ These parallels are cited only with a view to illustrating the type of story with which we here have to deal, and the prominence and significance of the role played by the queen. Into the difficult question of how the Finn-story developed and of its relationship to the great legends of Signy and Gudrun-Kriemhild, I do not care to enter here. Interinfluence among these stories there may have been, but the nature and extent of this are exceedingly difficult to determine. For a discussion of these relationships, the reader is referred to Boer, *Finnsage und Nibelungensage*, *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum*, Vol. XLVII, pp. 125 ff. Conclusive results in these matters are very difficult to attain. I cannot agree with Boer's theories.

emotions. Hengest receives more attention, but Hnæf is scarcely mentioned. Hildeburg is kept prominently before the hearer; the beginning, the middle, and the end of the *Episode* all make mention of her. First of all, her misfortunes are told:

- Surely Hildeburg could not praise
 The good faith of the Eotenas; innocent
 Was she bereaved of her dear ones in the play of shields,
 Of her son and brother; they fell as Fate decreed,
 1075 Wounded by the spear. A sad woman she!
 Not without reason did the daughter of Hoc
 Bemoan her fate when morning dawned
 And she beheld beneath the skies
 Her kinsmen dead by violence, where once she¹⁶ had enjoyed
 The greatest of earth's joys.

After the carnage at Finnsburg, the dead warriors are burnt upon a huge funeral pyre. Once more the poet seizes the occasion to arouse sympathy with the unfortunate queen.

- Then at the pyre of Hnæf, did Hildeburg command them
 1115 To give unto the flames her own son,
 To burn his body and to place him on the fire.
 The wretched woman wept on his shoulder,
 Lamented him in lays.

And in the closing picture of all, the very last words of the *Episode*, the avenging Danes are represented as bringing Hildeburg back to her old home.

- 1157 Over the sea-waves
 Did they carry the noble lady to the Danes,
 Brought her back to her people.

This elegiac treatment of the career of the unhappy Hildeburg recalls the fondness of the Anglo-Saxons for themes similar to this. They often drew the inspiration

¹⁶ See note 18, page 402 below.

for their lyric poetry from heroic story, and they were particularly fond of dwelling in these lyrics upon the misfortunes of distressed ladies. It is scarcely necessary to cite instances,—*The Banished Wife's Lament*, in all probability the lyric cry of the queen of the Offa-saga; *The Lover's Message*, in which Professor Schofield has noted a similarity to an incident of the Tristram-story; *The First Riddle*, variously interpreted as the lament of Signy or as an episode connected with Odoacer or some other hero; the stanzas in *The Song of Deor*, dealing with the princess Beadohild, the beloved of Weland, and perhaps also with Hild, the betrothed of Hedin.¹⁷ Lyric and epic technic are occasionally very close to each other. Miss Rickert has even conjectured that the Anglo-Saxon lyrics may have formed portions of lost epics, though we must be cautious about accepting this suggestion. Certain it is that both in mood and form the two are often strikingly similar.

The most distinguished lady at Hrothgar's banquet, his queen, is of foreign birth. We know little of her people, the Helmingas, or of their relations with the Danes. The name *Wealhþēow* itself is puzzling; it does not fall into line with Scandinavian traditions, and is perhaps, as Olrik has suggested, of English origin.¹⁸ It is interesting

¹⁷ For the *Banished Wife's Lament*, see article by the present writer in *Modern Philology*, Vol. v, pp. 387-405; for Schofield's suggestion, see his *English Literature from the Norman Conquest to Chaucer*, p. 202; for the so-called *First Riddle*, see *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, Vol. xvii, pp. 247 ff., and Bradley, *Athenæum*, 1902, p. 758; for the *Song of Deor*, an article by the writer in *Modern Philology*, Vol. ix, pp. 23-45; also by Tupper, *ibid.*, pp. 265-267.

¹⁸ *Danmarks Heltedigtning*, Vol. i, p. 27; cf. R. W. Chambers, *Widsith*, pp. 81 ff. Deutschbein, *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum*, Vol. lrv, p. 224 f., suggests that it may be an abstract name

to note that for her, as for Freawaru, tragedy is impending. Immediately after the lay of Hildeburg is finished, Wealhtheow, addressing her husband, pleads for the peaceful succession of her children Hrethric and Hrothmund, and appeals to the king's brother Hrothulf to assure it to them. How terribly her hopes were destined to be disappointed we can gather from hints in various places in the epic and elsewhere. Apparently estrangement came at length between Hrothgar and Hrothulf, and still later Hrothulf forced Hrethric from the royal power, and killed him. Vengeance followed, however, and he was himself slain by Heoroweard, the son of Hrothgar's elder brother Heorogar. "It is in contrast with this tragic background," says Dr. Chambers, "that the poet of *Beowulf* emphasizes the generous confidence towards each other of Beowulf and his kinsman, king Hygelac."¹⁹ May it not also be that the tragedy of Wealhtheow, which must have been well known to the audience for which the *Beowulf*-poet wrote, is designedly brought into connection with the tale of Hildeburg? The irony of it all is heightened by the rejoicings which fill the hall, and by the happiness which is at present the lot of Wealhtheow. Of such contrasts as this Germanic poets were exceedingly fond, as many passages in *Beowulf* illustrate. This is no episode of the Hildeburg type; but the telling of Hildeburg's story, in the presence of a queen who was herself of another people than that of her husband, whose efforts to keep the peace were destined to come to naught, and whose daughter Freawaru²⁰ was to experience much the

invented by the Anglo-Saxon poet. He compares such names as Widsith and Unferth, and suggests, although realizing that Wealhtheow is very sympathetically portrayed, that it may be "ein scherz- oder spott-name . . . ein ehrenname geworden."

¹⁹ *Loc. cit.*, p. 83.

²⁰ Possibly her step-daughter.

same melancholy destiny as the wife of King Finn, is surely not without significance.²¹

²¹ It has been conjectured that the tale of Hildeburg is an "abduction-story" of the type familiar in the story of Hilde and Hedin. This view has commanded some acceptance, and is occasionally repeated today. It was originated and most fully set forth by Möller (*Altenglisches Volksepos*, pp. 70 ff.). Möller based his proof upon deriving both the Finn-story and the Hilde-Hedin story from the myth of Frey and Skirnir and the wooing of the giant-maiden Gerd, familiar in the *Poetic Edda*. He found further confirmation for his theory in a late *märchen* from the island of Sylt.

It behooves us to be cautious in assigning "mythical" origins to matter as modern in much of its present form as the Hilde-Gudrun story. Even Müllenhoff's derivation of the Hildesage from the "necklace-myth"—a far more convincing interpretation—must be regarded with some scepticism. "Our sources are too late to draw such far-reaching conclusions in regard to the original form of the story" (Jiriczek, *Deutsche Heldensage*, p. 187, Leipzig, 1906). And it is impossible to assent when Möller attempts to connect the Finn-sage with the Gudrun portion of the Middle High German epic. There is little real similarity save that one of the characters is named Hildeburg. The same is the case with the *märchen* just referred to; it tells of a king named Finn, but presents little further likeness. The name Finn or Fin is not unknown in popular literature which has nothing to do with the Finn-story in *Beowulf*, witness the "diabolic personage or warlock" of the ballad "The Fause Knight on the Road" (Child, *English and Scottish Popular Ballads*, Vol. I, p. 21). Moreover, Möller's arguments depend to a large extent upon his very arbitrary interpretation of the text, which has already been criticized in detail by Heinzel, Bugge, and others, and cannot command acceptance today. Boer (*Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum*, Vol. XLVII, p. 150) has some good comments on Möller's view that this is an abduction-story of the Hilde-type, pointing out that Möller has no support from the text in reconstructing the events preceding the first clash between the Danes and the Frisians, and continuing: "If the Finn-sage were a variant of the Kudrun-sage, one would expect that Hrolf's revenge for Hoc [i. e., as Möller conceived the story] would be crowned with success. . . . The idea that Hengest is desirous of avenging his lord Hnæf is everywhere prominent; nowhere does the revenge concern Hildeburg. That she is carried away by the victors, moreover, does not prove that she had earlier been abducted by Finn,—what is to be done with a lady who

It is important to note that the *Finnsburg Episode* is, in the main, a story of vengeance. This theme is partly motivated and is rendered more effective by the opening passage, and by the further description of the sorrows of Hildeburg. The prominence of the revenge motive is not to be wondered at;—a song sung by a Danish minstrel in the hall of a Danish king on an occasion of great national rejoicing should leave no insult to Danish pride unavenged.

The treachery of the Frisians has brought great misfortune upon the Danes; their prince and leader Hnæf has been slain. Although many Frisians have been killed, the Danes are obliged to compromise with them, and to accept Finn as their lord,—a bitter humiliation. Oaths

belonged to the [Danish] royal family, and whose husband has been killed? She could not be left behind all alone in the devastated country." Boer is also quite right in denying (p. 160) the presence of mythical elements in the story. Möller's attempt to bring the tale of Finn into the class of *Entführungssagen* may, then, be considered sufficiently refuted. There is no need to traverse ground already fully covered by earlier critics. But the notion that Hildeburg was abducted still persists. Schücking says (*Beowulf*, ed. of 1913, p. 119) "Hildeburg ist wahrscheinlich eine von Finn im Kriege geraubte Dänin (vgl. 1159, 2930)." But what bearing do these references to the abduction of Ongentheow's queen have on the story of Finn and Hildeburg? It must first be shown that both tales have enough general similarity to warrant our identifying these two episodes as of the same character. There is nothing in the text to support the view that Hildeburg was abducted; the circumstances of her union with Finn are left quite untold. In any case, Hildeburg enjoyed a time of great happiness at Finn's court (1079-80) as his queen (*cwēn* 1153). In *Beowulf* *cwēn* always means "queen" (62 is of course defective), and the context *cyning on corðre ond sēo cwēn numen* makes this still plainer. The burden of proof is certainly on the shoulders of those who would make of the Finn-story a tale of abduction. For an elaborate attempt to connect the Finn-saga with the Hilde-saga "mythically," see Much's review of Panzer, *Archiv*, Vol. CVIII, pp. 406 f.; not a convincing piece of work.

of peace are sworn on both sides, but the Danes take the first advantageous opportunity to break their compact, and to revenge themselves upon Finn and his men. Throughout the tale every effort is made by the poet to enlist the sympathy of the hearer in the Danish cause, and to exalt Danish valor. Although Hnæf has been killed, nothing further is said of any Danish loss, while Finn has been "deprived of all his thanes, save only a few" (1080 ff.). It is he who is forced to sue for peace, not the Danes (1085 ff.). His own promises are detailed at length, but nothing is said of the Danish side of the bargain, though the implication is clearly that Finn is to become lord of all the Danes who have survived. Perhaps any special mention of the Danish pledges is avoided because the final consummation of revenge involves a breaking of these pledges. The death of Hnæf, then, and the humiliation of the Danes in being forced to follow the "slayer of their lord" ²² provides ample logical justification for Danish revenge, according to Germanic ideas, but the sufferings of Hildeburg through Frisian faithlessness touch the heart, and make retaliation seem all the more necessary and justifiable.

The revenge of the wife or of her kin for the treacherous attack by her husband's followers forms a prominent part of the stories of Signy and Siggeir, and of Gudrun and Atli, as we have just observed. It is not so clear in the tale of Ingeld and Freawaru. A passage in *Beowulf* seems to connect the burning of the hall Heorot with a feud between Hrothgar and his son-in-law Ingeld, but the exact circumstances which motivate this feud are not plain.

²² See below, p. 406, note 21.

The hall arose

- 82 High and wide-gabled; it waited for the hot surges,
 For the hostile flames. Not long was it to be
 Ere deadly hatred between son-in-law and father-in-law
 Should wake to life through bloody feud.

And Widsith relates that

- 45 Hrothwulf and Hrothgar for a very long time
 Kept peace together, uncle and nephew,
 After they drove away the race of the Vikings
 And beat down the power of Ingeld,
 Cut to pieces at Heorot the hosts of the Heathobards.

Axel Olrik, in his very detailed study of the Ingeld-Starkad story, expresses the belief that these passages represent another conception of the "strife" after the marriage of Ingeld and Freawaru narrated in *Beowulf* 2032-2067, with the difference that it is localized at Heorot, instead of at the court of the Heathobards. The testimony of Saxo upon this point is interesting, but inconclusive. The most natural reconstruction of the story seems to be that proposed by Müllenhoff,²³ that the defeat of the Heathobards at Heorot was a sequel to the earlier outbreak of strife at Ingeld's court, that it was a punishment for the insult to Freawaru, for the death of her thane, and for the breaking of the oaths, and that with this decisive victory at Heorot the Danish-Heathobard feud came to an end. But Olrik rejects this interpretation.²⁴ The point is in any case obscure and difficult of decision. It may not do to rely confidently for the later events in the Ingeld-story upon the passages just cited. But the implication of impending trouble between Danes and Heathobards is clear. No Dane could let the matter

²³ *Deutsche Alterthumskunde*, Vol. v, p. 316 (Berlin, 1891).

²⁴ *Heltedigtning*, Vol. II, p. 39; "Müllenhoff's opfattelse lader sig næppe opretholde."

rest with the killing of the bride's thane. Revenge is in the air, even if its course cannot be traced with certainty.

Before considering in more detail the nature of the vengeance in the Finn-story, the events leading up to this vengeance must be somewhat more carefully examined, with particular reference to the interpretation of the text.

II

THE TREACHERY OF THE FRISIANS

The actors in this drama are members of two North Sea tribes, or rather groups of tribes. For purposes of convenience we may call one group Danes and the other Frisians. The original leader of the Danish group was apparently Hnæf, who on being killed in the Frisian onslaught was succeeded by Hengest. We are told in *Widsith* that Hnæf ruled the Hocingas (29). *Beowulf* seems to make it clear that he was the son of Hoc, and brother of Hildeburg. His men are called *Dene*, and he himself is "battle-warrior of the Here-Scyldings" (1108), and "hero of the Half-Danes," *hæleð Healf-Dena* (1069).¹ The exact relation of "Half-Danes" to Danes proper is not clear. Possibly they were an allied folk who had strengthened by intermarriage the ties which bound them

¹Or *hæleð* may be plural, referring to his warriors. There are many interpretations of these opening lines. In the present argument in regard to the tribes it makes little difference whether *hæleð* be taken as singular or plural. For the arbitrary alteration of the MS. reading to *Healfdenes* there is no justification. Bugge rightly rejected it: "ich finde kein beispiel davon, dass ein anführer als der *hæleð* seines königs bezeichnet wird." The best modern editors print the reading of the MS.; see texts of Wyatt, Sedgfield, Holt-hausen, Schücking, etc.

to the Danes. The name *Healfdene* is commonly held to indicate that the hero's mother was from another people. Probably such an epithet as "Half-Dane" need not be taken too literally. Elsewhere in the poem "West-Danes" and "East-Danes" are terms somewhat loosely used, perhaps chosen for their picturesque suggestion of the extent of the Danish territory, perhaps for metrical reasons or for the sake of alliteration.² Sigferth, the *Secgena lēod of Frag.* 24, is clearly an ally of the Danes. It is sometimes said that his people were one of the Half-Danish tribes, but there appears to be no conclusive evidence of this.³ It seems doubtful if, especially in poetry, the nicer geographical and political distinctions between these peoples were carefully maintained. Indeed, such distinctions may well not have been understood either by the Anglo-Saxon poet or by his hearers. But the broader lines of contrast are clear. Opposed to the Danes are the Frisians, the men of King Finn, who are also called *Eotenas* (1072, 1088, etc.). Explanation of this term is difficult, and further complicated by being involved in the discussion over the ethnography of the Jutes. A reasonable solution seems to be that the word *Eotenas* is the result of confusion of the tribal name *Eotas* (*Widsith*, *Ȫtas* or *Ȫtan*), probably the *Iutae* of Bede, and the *Eutii* or *Eutiones* of Theudebert's letter to Justinian, with the appellative *eotenas* "elves," "supernatural beings." This is the view of Siebs, perhaps the foremost authority on

² Cf. 828, 383, 392, etc.

³ The reason for grouping the Hocingas and the Secgan in this way seems to be that Hnæf the Hocing is called a Half-Dane, and that among the forces under his command are the Secgan. But even if the Secgan were allied folk, under the command of a leader of the Half-Danes, and included in the general term Dene, they may not themselves have been Half-Danes.

Frisian conditions, who conjectures that the *Eutii* or *Eutiones* were once the nearest neighbors of the Frisians, and that the occupation by the Frisians of Jutish territory after the Conquest of Britain assisted the confusion between the two names.⁴ It may also be suggested that the name Finn, occasionally applied to supernatural beings in Germanic story, may have further helped in this process. Finn, King of the *Eotas*, might easily be confused with a Finn of the *eotenas*. It should be said that the Frisian king mentioned in *Beowulf* has nothing supernatural about him, nor is there any evidence of his connection with mythology. The explanation here offered for the term *Eotenas* may be regarded as conjectural, but of one thing we may be sure: that the Eotenas were not Danes; they were the group of men opposed to the Danes.⁵

⁴See Paul's *Grundriss*, Vol. II, p. 524, and Vol. I, p. 1158. For a careful review of the chief questions connected with the location of the Jutes, and the forms of the proper name applied to this people, with bibliographical references, see Chambers, *Widsith*, pp. 237 ff.

⁵Möller's unfortunate theory that the *Eotenas* are the men of Hnæf the Dane, which has done much to obscure understanding of this story, is revived in Miss M. G. Clarke's *Sidelights on Teutonic History During the Migration Period*, Cambridge (Eng.) University Press, 1911, pp. 181 ff. Her arguments are not weighty, and she does not appear to have considered the criticisms of this interpretation made by previous scholars. See especially Heinzel's review of Möller's *Altenglisches Volksepos*, Kiel, 1883, in *Anzeiger für deutsches Altertum*, Vol. x, p. 227, Trautmann, *Bonner Beiträge*, VII, p. 13; also Bugge, ten Brink and Boer (cf. p. 374 above), Sedgefield, Schücking, and Wyatt in their editions, and Gering in his translation of the poem, in which he renders Eotenas "Friesen." Others might easily be cited.

Miss Clarke says: "In the first case, l. 1072, the use of the word (*i. e. Eotenas*) is ambiguous; there is nothing to show to which party it refers. We will let Heinzel reply to this: "fürwahr Hildeburg hatte keinen grund die treue (oder vielmehr "güte") der Eotenas zu preisen, sie wurde ohne schuld des bruders und des sohnes

The view that the name *Eotenas* really points to the Jutes, or by confusion, to Frisians inhabiting Jutish territory, seems to be confirmed by the passage which describes the fortunes of King Heremod. After distinguishing himself by savage and unkingly violence towards his own people (cf. 1718 ff.), Heremod suffered the consequences.

901 . . . Heremōdes hild sweðrode,
eafōð ond ellen. Hē mid Eotenum wearð
on fēonda geweald forð forlācen,
snūde forsended.

"Heremod's prowess in battle waned, his strength and might. He among the Jutes was betrayed into the hands

im kampfes beraubt.'—Dieser bruder, den sie durch die feindseligkeit der Eotenas verloren hat, soll auch ein Eote sein, und sie selbst eine Eotin!"

She continues: "In the second case, *viz.*, l. 1088, *Eotena* seems clearly to refer to Hnæf's men: *hie*, which is the subject of the clause, which must denote the same persons as the *hig* in l. 1085, which is the subject of the principal clause, and which evidently refers to the Frisians." Miss Clarke forgets the freedom with which the subject often shifts in Anglo-Saxon poetry; let her look at the plural verb *gemænden* 1101, a few lines below in this same passage, the subject of which is clearly the Frisians. Does she think the *hie* in the next line refers to the same people? (See also Heinzel, *loc. cit.*)

As to 1141, Miss Clarke says: "Commentators who wish to make *Eotena* correspond to *Fresna* translate *gemunde* as 'remember,' *i. e.* take vengeance on; but it is much more natural to suppose that the feeling described by *gemunde* was one of sorrow for lost friends, in which case *Eotena bearn* refers of course to Hengest's own men." How is it possible to maintain that this is "more natural" after the lines just preceding, in which Hengest's desire for vengeance is expressly emphasized, *hē tō gýrn-wræce swiðor þōhte þonne tō sǣlāde*? Such special pleading as this hardly deserves refutation, but it is perhaps well that the futility of the attempt to support this general theory should be made as plain as possible. For the interpretation of the vexed passage 1140 ff. see below.

of his enemies, quickly sent forth." Joseph ⁶ proposed to render *eotenas* "Jutes," while otherwise accepting Bugge's reading "durch verrat in die gewalt der teufel gegeben, schnell zur hölle entsendet," ⁷ which has been accepted by many translators.⁸ I see no reason for assuming that *fēonda*, which usually refers to mortal enemies in *Beowulf*, has a different meaning here.⁹ Sievers and Sarrazin have done much to illuminate the passage, by citations from Saxo and from the Swedish chronicler Messenius.¹⁰ The passage quoted by Sarrazin from Messenius is especially interesting in the present connection. "Lotherus igitur Danorum rex, ab Othino vehementer infestatus, & ope suorum propter nimiam destitutus tyrannidem superatusque in *Iutiam* profugit." The resemblance of this to the lines just quoted is obvious. Defeated in battle, and on account of his tyranny hated by his own people, Heremod was forced to take refuge in the land of his enemies *the Jutes* (cf. *mid Eotenum*, 902). Here again, then, as in the Finnsburg story, we have an illustration of the hostilities of these two neighboring countries, reflected in saga.

Comparison of episodes of the general type to which the Finn-story belongs, or appears to belong, and the occurrence of the significant words "Surely Hildeburg

⁶ *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie*, Vol. xxii, p. 388.

⁷ Paul and Braune, *Beiträge*, Vol. xii, pp. 39 ff.

⁸ As for example by Gering and Gummere.

⁹ It was urged by Bugge that 1720 ff. mean "dass Heremod für sein böses tun und treiben in der hölle strafe leidet." I can see no necessity for so understanding the later passage, which really begins with line 1711. The "departure from the revelry of men" seems probably to refer to his exile.

¹⁰ Sievers, "Beowulf und Saxo," *Berichte der kgl. sächs. Gesellschaft der Wiss. zu Leipzig*, 1895, pp. 175 ff.; Sarrazin, *Anglia*, Vol. xix, p. 392.

could not praise the good faith of the Eotenas" (1071-2), make it altogether probable that Finn's invitation of Hnæf and the Danes to his court was but a ruse to get them into his power, and so satisfy some earlier injury or enmity.¹¹ What the nature or cause of this hostility was, we are not informed. Possibly the ancient and traditional ill-feeling between the two peoples is sufficient to explain it; possibly vengeance was sought to satisfy some particular grudge. Of direct evidence in regard to this there is, so far as I am aware, not a trace. The tale begins, appropriately enough for a Danish audience, with the treacherous attack of the Frisians upon their guests.

The opening lines of the *Episode* raise various difficulties. Perhaps it will be clearest to print the text as given by Holthausen, which seems to embody the best solution of these difficulties.¹²

	bær wæs sang <i>ond</i> swæg	samod ætgædere
	fore Healðenes	hildewisan,
1065	gomenwudu grēted,	gid oft wrecen,
	ðonne healgamen	Hrōþgāres scop
	æfter medobence	mānan scolde,
	Finnes eaferan,	ða hie sē fār begeat.
	Hæleð Healf-Dena,	Hnæf Scyldinga
1070	in Frēswæle feallan scolde.	

The chief stumbling-block in this passage has been the construction of *eaferum* 1068, here read *eaferan*. The best explanation seems to be that by Klaeber, following up a suggestion of Trautmann:¹³ "*healgamen* is the first,

¹¹ See p. 378 above.

¹² References to Holthausen are to the second edition, Heidelberg and New York, 1908. I have not, however, retained the marking of vowels and diphthongs peculiar to this text. The marks of quotation preceding 1068 are also omitted, the reason for which is explained below.

¹³ Trautmann (*Bonner Beiträge*, vii, p. 11) proposed the reading *eaferan*, to be regarded as a corruption of *geferan*.

eaferan the second object of *mānan*. The collocation of such dissimilar substantives, which offends our modern feeling for style, is not seldom to be found in Anglo-Saxon poetry.”¹⁴ A literal translation into modern English is therefore of necessity somewhat awkward; the following rendering does no violence to the sense:

- There were song and music, blended together
Before Healfdene's battle-chieftain;
1065 The harp was struck, a lay oft recited,
When Hrothgar's minstrel o'er the mead-benches
Brought to men's mind the joys of the hall,
The swift attack falling on warriors¹⁵ of Finn.
The hero of the Half-Danes, Hnæf of the Scyldings,
1070 In Frisian slaughter was doomed to fall.

Editors have read the passage in a great variety of ways. Wyatt follows Grein “in regarding *eaferum* as an instrumental plural with reference to *feallan scolde*.” Others have sought to avoid this harsh and unusual construction by reading *be Finnes eaferum* or *Finnes eaferum fram*. Sedgfield and Holthausen in his first edition assume a gap after *mānan scolde* 1067. Schücking, while accepting Klaeber's reading, places a comma after *begeat* 1068, ending the sentence with *feallan scolde*. It is hard to reconcile this punctuation with syntax. The passage is in any case a difficult one, and a thorn in the flesh for the editor.

The interpretation here followed is sustained by the character of the episode and the circumstance of its recitation. One point of some importance has, I think, been overlooked, that the contest mentioned in 1068, *Finnes*

¹⁴ *Anglia*, Vol. XXVIII, p. 433, where parallels and comment are given. See also Herrig's *Archiv*, Vol. CVIII, p. 370.

¹⁵ Cosijn, *Aant.*, p. 26, points out that *eaferan* means ‘warriors,’ and compares 1710.

eaferan, *ðā hīe sē fār begeat*, is in all probability not that in the beginning, in consequence of which the Danes were forced to conclude a peace, and become dependents of Finn, but the last struggle of all, that in which they took vengeance upon Finn for their wrongs. This is the fight in which the Danes are the aggressors, in which "a sudden attack fell upon the men of Finn," whereas everything goes to show that in the earlier contest, related in the *Fragment*, the attack was made by the Frisians. It has already been pointed out that the whole interest of the *Episode*, after the lyric opening referring to the sorrows of Hildeburg, is focussed upon the revenge at the end. A reference to the final struggle, in which the Danes were completely victorious over their enemies, doing great injury to them, and completely wiping out a bitter old score, surely makes a better parallel for the *healgamen* at Hrothgar's banquet than the first fight at Finnsburg, which is indeed a glorification of Danish valor, but does not relate a contest in which the Frisians were attacked.

The introduction, then, as I conceive it, states that Hrothgar's scop sang of a thing pleasing to the Danish warriors in the hall, the vengeance taken upon Finn. The lay proper, or a paraphrase of it, then begins, recounting the injuries which motivated that vengeance.

There is considerable difference of opinion among editors and translators as to the point at which the lay itself begins. For it has generally been assumed that the *Beowulf*-poet, after this short introduction, quotes the words of the poet in Hrothgar's hall. Consequently the *Episode* is generally printed within marks of quotation. Holt-hausen, Wyatt, Sedgefield begin this quotation with 1068 *Finnes eaferum* (or *eaferan*); Schücking with 1071 *Nē hūru Hildeburg*; the old Heyne-Socin text (1903) with 1069, *Hæleð Healfdena*, so also Trautmann, *loc. cit.*, p. 30.

Gering, Child, Tinker, and Clark Hall begin with 1068; Lesslie Hall with 1069. But is the *Episode* to be regarded as a direct quotation at all? Is it not rather the *Beowulf*-poet's résumé of the scop's lay? Consider the earlier Sigemund-Episode (871-915), in which this is certainly the case. As the warriors return from the Haunted Mere, on the morning after Beowulf's victory over Grendel, they amuse themselves with horse-racing and with song. A thane of the king, skilled in story, who has the treasures of past lore at his command, entertains the company, improvising a song in honor of Beowulf, in which the hero is compared to Sigemund the dragon-slayer ¹⁶ and contrasted to Heremod, the wicked and cruel king.

Secg eft ongan
 sið Bēowulfes snyttrum styrian,
 ond on spēd wrecan spel gerāde,
 wordum wrixlan; wēl-hwylc geewæð,
 875 þæt hē fram Sigemundes secgan hȳrde
 ellen-dædum, uncūðes fela,
 Wælsinges gewin, wide siðas,
 þāra-þe gumena bearn gearwe ne-wiston,
 fæhðe ond fyrena

The general method of introducing the episode here is much the same as in the tale of Finn, but it is impossible to treat the account of Sigemund and what follows as a direct quotation of the lay sung by the improvisator; the introductory sentence and the narrative are too closely welded for any line of division. No one of the editors just mentioned has included the Sigemund-Heremod episode within marks of punctuation. Had the original lay been directly quoted, the comparison between Beowulf and

¹⁶ Almost by implication; but the point is none the less obvious. It is hardly necessary to mention the confusion between Sigemund and Sigurd or Siegfried.

Sigemund would probably have been much more clearly emphasized.

I do not believe, then, that we are justified in treating the *Finn-Episode* as reproducing the very words of Hrothgar's poet, but rather as a paraphrase of his words. This conclusion is further supported by the reminiscential and allusive tone of the *Episode*, contrasting so strongly with the vigor and concreteness of the *Fragment*. Since the *Episode* is merely a paraphrase, forming a part of the main narrative, it is probably impossible to mark off its beginning, and certainly an error to print it as a direct quotation.

The scene of the treacherous attack upon the Danes is Finn's royal residence in Friesland, the *hēa-burh* (1127), called *Finns-buruh* (*Fragment* 36). The details of this attack, as told in the *Fragment*, we shall consider presently; we may first look at the narrative in the *Episode*.¹⁷

¹⁷ It has been held that the earlier scenes of the poem do not take place in Friesland (Trautmann, *Finn und Hildebrand*, p. 60; Boer, *Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum*, Vol. XLVII, p. 137). Trautmann says: "Hnæf trifft mit seinen friesischen verwanten zusammen nicht im eigentlichen Friesland—in dies ziehn die Friesen und Dänen zusammen erst später (Einlage 1125-27)—, sondern in einem nicht genannten lande, in welchem Finn einen herrschersitz hat (Finnes buruh)." The contrary is asserted by Binz, *Zeitschrift für deutsche Philologie*, xxxvii, p. 532, and Klaeber, *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, Vol. vi, p. 193. The latter remarks, "After the conclusion of the treaty between the two parties and the completion of the funeral rites, the Frisian warriors—presumably men who had been summoned by Finn in preparation for the encounter with the Danes—return to their respective homes in the country (*heaburh* is a high-sounding epic term that should not be pressed), whilst Hengest stays with Finn in *Finnesburh* (where the latter is subsequently slain: *æt his selfes ham* 1147)." It needs but little reflection to see that Binz and Klaeber are right. It is, furthermore, reasonable to suppose that the place where Hildeburg had experienced the greatest of earthly joys (1080) and where gold was lifted from Finn's hoard (1107) was not an outlying and temporary abode,

The general situation in the opening lines (1071 ff.) is clear. In the morning after the night attack by the Frisians in which Hnæf lost his life, Hildeburg looks on her slain kinsmen, in the very place¹⁸ where she had experienced the greatest happiness that the world had to give (1079). This points to a time of peace and tranquillity preceding, during which she was living in happiness at the Frisian court. Apparently the son who is killed, and later burnt on the funeral pyre with his uncle, is her child by Finn. Otherwise we must assume that she had been married years before, and had had a child by her former husband. The poet then explains with great care the terms of the peace concluded between the rival peoples. The reasons for this peace are:

War had swept away
 All the thanes of Finn save a few only,
 So that he could not on the place of combat
 Offer to Hengest aught of conflict,
 Nor in battle protect the woeful remainder (of his force)
 From the prince's thane.

but Finn's chief city. *Hēa-burh* does not seem to me too high-sounding an epic term to be in keeping as applied to that city. I do not attach any importance to Binz's argument that the fight must have taken place in Friesland because it is called *Frēs-wæl* (1070). "Frisian slaughter" might take place wherever Frisians were to be found, at home or abroad. As for 1125 ff., the paratactic construction so characteristic of Anglo-Saxon makes it natural for the poet to say "to look upon Friesland, the homes and high city" rather than "to look upon the homes and the high city of Friesland." Cf. *pæt hē fram Sigemunde secgan hýrde ellen-dædum* 875 (the emendation *Sigemundes* is to my mind an error, resting upon forgetfulness of Anglo-Saxon idiom).

¹⁸ This is altogether the most simple and unforced reading of *pær* 1079. MS. *hē* is altered to *hēo* by all modern editors. There can scarcely be a doubt that this is right; to construe the pronoun as referring to Finn would be very awkward. Moreover, there is an obvious contrast between Hildeburg's witnessing the *morðor-bealo māga* and her previous enjoyment of *māste . . . worolde wynne*.

So the *Episode* expressly says that Finn had too few men to wage offensive or defensive warfare; it was not merely that the narrow passage which they were defending gave the Danes an advantage which the Frisians could not overcome. Yet the poet tells us that the Danes were "forced by necessity" to make peace and "follow the slayer of their lord" (1102 f.). But if Finn's men were too few to prevail over the Danes, why did the latter assent to a condition which, according to Germanic ideas, was in the highest degree dishonorable?

It seems probable that the present narrative does not preserve the original motivation of the story, but that in their desire to set forth the situation to the advantage of the Danes, story-tellers had altered this motivation. The original narrative perhaps related that Finn, after inflicting severe punishment on the Danes,¹⁹ concluded to offer the survivors terms of peace, which, in view of the superior power of the Frisians, were perforce accepted. Finn's offer would be natural enough. There would be no profit for him in exterminating all the Danes; such good fighters might on the other hand form a valuable addition to his own forces, if they could be induced to swear allegiance to him. But singers forgot, as time went on, that acceptance of the terms of peace offered by Finn becomes plausible only if the Danes cannot contend against the Frisians longer. So, in their desire to exalt the prowess of the Danes, they altered the story a little, and said that so many Frisians were killed in the hall-fight that Finn was obliged to come to terms. It is certain, as has been pointed out in the preceding pages, that the poet is making every effort in the *Episode* to present Danish valor in the most

¹⁹ Cf. 1098, in which the term *wēa-lāf* is clearly applied to the Danish forces.

favorable light. Finn is forced to sue for peace, and his promises are detailed at great length, while nothing is said of the pledges of the Danes, excepting, by implication, that they are to become Finn's men.

How such a shift in the telling of the story took place is 'well shown by the *Fragment*. Here there are still further divergences from the epic, and they are all in the direction of the exaltation of Danish valor; a five days' fight, as against that in a single night in the *Episode*, and no Danish loss in the defence of the hall,—not even the death of Hnæf is mentioned, but it is said explicitly that no one of the sixty Danish warriors fell. Such alterations are all the more natural in a single incident detached from a longer epic. Perhaps the form of the story in the *Fragment* affected the motivation of the epic itself. For a discussion of these questions, as they affect the *Fragment*, the reader is referred to the appropriate place in the following chapter. In order to understand the present form of the poem, we must take due account of the history of the material in *Beowulf* before it reached the man who put it into the form in which we now have it. The Finn-story is, of course, old epic tradition, which was in circulation in oral form for many years before it was written down, and so was subject to all the shifts and inconsistencies which arise in popular narrative poetry. Such differences in motivation are conspicuous in other parts of the poem; witness the varying conceptions of the nature and location of the Haunted Mere, or the different motives that impel Beowulf to do battle with the dragon.²⁰ The original motivation here suggested is of course purely

²⁰ See on this general subject an earlier article by the present writer, "The Haunted Mere in Beowulf," *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, Vol. XXVII, pp. 223 ff. (1912).

hypothetical, but only by some such hypothesis as this does the situation become reasonable. It must be remembered that the Danish submission to the leader of the men who had slain Hnæf was, according to the notions of that age, not at all a heroic act under any circumstances, however great the Danish straits might be, and that it was almost incomprehensible if the force opposing the Danes was so small that their leader was obliged to propose peace on highly liberal terms. The humiliation of such a submission is sufficiently shown by the fact that one of the terms of peace was that no Finnish warrior should suggest that the Danes were following the slayer of their lord, and that if any were so rash as to call this to mind, he should be punished by the sword (1099-1106).

The duty of warriors under such circumstances is well shown by a familiar passage in the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, which in many ways affords a close and instructive parallel to the situation in the *Finnsburg Episode*. In the year 755, it is related that King Cynewulf was attacked by an enemy named Cyneheard, whose men surrounded the house in which the king was tarrying. Although Cynewulf fought bravely, he was killed. Then the king's thanes, hearing the commotion, ran out. "The ætheling (Cyneheard) offered each of them life and property (*i. e.*, if they would come to terms with him), but *none of them would accept this*, fighting on until they all lay dead save one British hostage, and he was sore wounded." In the morning more thanes of the dead king came to meet the ætheling, who had shut himself up in the town where the king had fallen. Cyneheard once more offered them property, as much as they would have, if they would recognize him as king, and told them that kinsmen of theirs were with him, who would not desert him. "And they replied that no kinsman was dearer to them than their

lord, and *that they would never follow his slayer.*" ²¹ The king's party then offered their kinsmen with the atheling a chance to depart in safety before the fight began, and the kinsmen replied that the same chance had been offered the comrades of those outside who had been slain with the king (and refused), and that they considered it would be no more worthy of them to accept this offer than it was of the king's defenders. The attacking party then rushed at the gates, forced an entrance, and slew all those within save one, and he was grievously wounded.

In this vigorous old narrative, told with spirit despite its clumsy syntax, we see the exact alternative which was accepted by the Danes in the *Episode* proudly refused. "They would never follow the slayer of their lord." That the Danes did choose to become the liegemen of Finn was an intolerable state of affairs which could not, in the nature of things, last long. The next stage of the story deals with the terrible revenge which was to wipe out the memory of this humiliating submission.

After peace has been solemnly confirmed by oath, and gold lifted from the hoard,²² the dead are burnt upon a

²¹ Compare the similarity of phraseology: *Chronicle*: *ond hie nǣfre his banan folgian noldon*, and *Episode* 1102 *þeah hie hira bēag-gyfan banan folgedon*. We are not to understand, of course, that Hnæf actually fell at the hands of Finn, but that Finn was responsible for the attack resulting in his death. Cf. Heinzel, *Anzeiger*, Vol. xv, p. 192.

²² I take this to mean that Finn rewarded his warriors on the conclusion of the treaty of peace with presents of gold. They might well expect this reward after their hard fighting. By the terms of the treaty (cf. 1089), the Danes would have their share when the presents were distributed. This would also be appropriate to the sealing of a compact of peace. It is to be noted that the lifting of gold from the hoard is mentioned in direct connection with the swearing of the solemn oath. *Ǽð was geǣfned ond icge gold āhæfen of horde* (1107). Klaeber's explanation (*Journal of English*

magnificent funeral pyre, raised in honor of Hnæf, as most illustrious of the heroes. Upon it lies also the body of Hildeburg's son, the nephew of Hnæf. As the curling smoke rises to the heavens, the lamentations of the unhappy queen break forth anew. It is a terrible and moving picture which the poet here makes vivid in a few graphic lines; the crackling flames, the curling smoke, the blood bursting from the bodies.

Flame swallowed all,
 Greediest of spirits, whom war had claimed
 of either people; their prosperity was done!

With this picture the first phase of the tragedy with which we are acquainted, the phase which we have called the Treachery of the Frisians, comes to an end. Before we consider in detail the vengeance taken by the Danes, we must examine briefly the hall-fight as related in the *Finnsburg Fragment*.

III

THE DEFENCE OF THE HALL

The relation of the *Finnsburg Fragment* to the *Episode* does not offer serious difficulties. There can hardly be a doubt that the *Fragment* sets forth, as the majority of critics have agreed, the fight at the opening of the story. Finn's men are clearly the aggressors, and the Danes the defenders. The *Episode* is much concerned with the Danish desire for revenge after a treacherous attack; it is natural to see in the *Fragment* a more detailed descrip-

and Germanic Philology, Vol. VIII, p. 256), does not seem to me so convincing,—unless *āð* "oath" be emended to *ād* "pyre." Possibly if we knew the meaning of the obscure word *icge* some light might be thrown on the matter.

tion of that attack, which is obviously one of the most important and interesting moments in the whole story. The defence of a hall was of course a favorite episode of Germanic story-tellers; as Professor Ker puts it, "No kind of adventure is so common or better told in the earlier heroic manner than the defence of a narrow place against odds."

Like the visitors to Etzel's court in the *Nibelungenlied*, the Danes have been quartered in a hall. While they are asleep at night, they are set upon by the forces of their host. The "battle-young king" Hnæf, probably with a companion, is on the watch while his men are sleeping.¹

¹Möller maintained that the "battle-young king" is not Hnæf, but Hengest. He admitted that this would not agree with the *Episode*, which calls Hengest 1085 þēodnes þegn, and his men þēodenlēase, 1103, but he thought that "diese bezeichnungen im Beowulf können vom zusammensteller der episode sein." We must admit the possibility of discrepancies between *Episode* and *Fragment*, but the chances are against making Hengest a king, since he nowhere gets that appellation in the *Episode*. Again, he is expressly stated that in the ensuing fight Hnæf's warriors repaid him for sweet mead 39, f. Bugge (Paul and Braune, *Beiträge*, XII, p. 21) has shown that this cannot, as Möller proposed, be a tribute to the memory of the dead leader, with no reference to the living one. Möller thought that *sylf* 17 is most naturally taken as referring to the *cyning* 2, but he admitted that if Hengest had already been mentioned in the (lost) opening of the lay, this argument would have no force. It is quite possible that Hengest is the other watcher, possibly the man who speaks the words . . . hornas byrnað nǣfre. There seems to be no reason why *sylf* should not be applied to a prominent character like Hengest even if he has not been already mentioned. The background of the story and the characters in it were of course familiar to hearers of the *Fragment*,—these old stories were not new to their audiences in plot. For Möller's discussion, see his *Volksepos*, p. 65.

One would think that Möller's theories about the interpretation of *Episode* and *Fragment* might now be regarded as obsolete. But we continue to find them set forth in books about *Beowulf*. Indeed, one editor, Sedgfield, goes so far as to give them the place of

A gleam of light is mistaken for a moment for a fire in the gable of the hall, or for the breaking dawn, or the passing of a dragon, but only for a moment; it is the moonlight shining on the accoutrements of advancing warriors. Moonlight reflected on burnished weapons and armor is apparently a part of the poetical "machinery" of a secret attack by night, just as the raven and the wolf were the common adornments of a place of combat. In the *Völundarkviða*, the men of King Nithad attack the cunning smith in his hall:

By night fared the warriors,
 Bossed were their breastplates,
 Shining their shields
 In the waning moonlight;
 They stepped from their saddles
 Close by the gable,
 Thence stole they in
 Down through the hall.²

And in the *Nibelungenlied*, as Volker and Hagen together keep watch, while their companions sleep, Volker sees in the distance the gleam of helmets, and knows that enemies are approaching.

Des nahtes wol enmitten, i'ne weiz iz ê geschach,
 daz Völkêr der küene einen helm schînen sach
 Verre ûz einer vinster . . .³

So the "battle-young king" in the *Fragment* calls out in a loud voice to his men, warning them of the impending

honor (second edition, p. 258, *sub* Finn). While this can still happen, there is justification for criticising Möller's position once more. It should be said that while the textual work in Sedgefield's edition is good, his remarks on the history of the material are not authoritative.

² From the edition of Hildebrand, Paderborn 1876, p. 133.

³ Ed. Bartsch, Leipzig, 1886, strophe 1837, Aventure xxx.

attack.⁴ His stirring words find immediate response; Sigferth and Eaha rush to guard one of the entrances to the hall, apparently the one where the king has been standing, while Ordlaaf and Guthlaaf, beyond doubt the Oslaf and Guthlaaf of the *Episode*, and Hengest, apparently the next in authority after Hnæf, take their stand at the opposite entrance. In the attacking party an impetuous warrior, Garulf, the son of Guthlaaf,⁵ is restrained from an immediate onslaught by Guthere, who urges that it is better for Garulf not to risk losing his life in the very beginning by an attack on the doorway. But Garulf, recklessly brave, calls out in a clear voice above the tumult and demands to know who the defender of the door may be. Sigferth answers proudly and provocatively. Thereupon Garulf can restrain himself no longer, and in the conflict of warriors about the entrance to the hall he is the first to be struck down. Many others fall; the fight lasts five days; the Danes defend the hall successfully, without losing a man. Then the conflict seems to cease. A "wounded hero" goes away from the place of conflict, his armor shattered. He is in all probability one of the attackers, as they would naturally be the ones to retire, in case the defence of the hall were successful. Possibly he

⁴ His meaning is not quite clear. Bugge (*Beiträge*, XII, p. 23) renders *fremman* (9) "zur ausübung bringen." If *nīð* is here close to its original meaning of "activity," or "malicious activity," the meaning may be: "now arise deeds of woe, which will put into execution the hatred of this people" ("this hatred of the people"). If *nīð* is to be rendered "tribulatio," "afflictio," and *fremman* "facere," we may translate "which will bring tribulation to this people." Gering (*Übersetzung*) renders it thus: "Wehgeschick droht, da mit grimmigem Hass der Gegner uns heimsucht." Gummere (*Oldest English Epic*): "foul deeds rise to whelm this people with peril and death."

⁵ For a discussion of the identity of this Guthlaaf, see below, pp. 425-6.

is Guthere. The "shepherd of the people" who asks after the warriors, how they are recovering from their wounds, is probably Finn. It would be in accordance with the constant effort to exalt Danish valor in this tale that the Frisians should be the first to withdraw from the fight, and that their wounds should be so grave as to be a matter of solicitude to their king. The *Fragment* ends as abruptly as it begins; but this very abruptness is not without its effect in a scene so full of rapid action.

The *Fragment* does not agree in all its details with the *Episode*. The implication in the *Episode* is clearly that the fight lasted but a single night (1077); while in the *Fragment* it continued for five days. Moreover the *Fragment* states that no Danish warrior fell in the defence of the hall, whereas the *Episode* makes it plain that Hnæf and other warriors (*wēa-lāfe*, 1098) had been killed. The five days' fight is probably epic exaggeration, like the whole day that it took Beowulf to reach the bottom of the Haunted Mere, or the brilliancy of Heorot, "which shone over many lands" (311). Similarly, the poet of the *Fragment* emphasizes Danish valor by asserting that no one of the warriors of this people was slain in the defence of the hall. It is very generally agreed that the *Fragment* is not a part of a longer epic, but that it is an epic lay, and "ein besonders gedrungenes Lied" at that (Brandl).⁶ "It most probably confined itself to the battle in the hall," so Ker thinks, and this seems entirely plausible.⁷ The poet, then, is concerned only with this single episode or some extension of it; he is making his effect by a single scene; he is not endeavoring to fit his narrative without inconsistencies into the longer epic tale of which it forms

⁶ Paul's *Grundriss*, (second edition), Vol. II, p. 985.

⁷ *Loc. cit.*, p. 84.

a part. We know that in heroic story different accounts of the same event or series of events seldom if ever tally exactly. Even within a single poem, like *Beowulf* itself, the contradictions and inconsistencies are considerable. Brandl, in commenting upon the discrepancies between *Finnsburg* and *Beowulf*, warns us that such discrepancies “zwischen verschiedenen Fassungen mündlich überlieferter Geschichten immer und überall auftauchen.” On the whole, the surprising thing is that the divergences between the *Episode* and the *Fragment* are so slight. But this detached treatment of a single incident drawn from a longer epic narrative shows how the details of that incident may be slightly altered so as to make it more effective in itself, though less in agreement with the longer story.

It seems hardly necessary to review once more the details of Möller's theory of the relation of the *Fragment* to the *Episode*, or of the interpretation of the Finn-saga as a whole. The weakness of Möller's position is obvious to the careful reader; and it has already been pointed out in detailed criticisms by Bugge, Heinzel, and others. His conception of the story depends not only upon his novel interpretations of the text, but also, to a considerable degree, upon his now universally discredited “strophentheorie,” and his view that the *Episode* was made up of two separate lays, one dealing with Hildeburg and the burial of Hnæf, and the other with Hengest.⁸ Much of his reconstruction is purely imaginative. He maintained that Finn had carried off Hildeburg, and that her father Hoc had pursued the fugitives, and was slain in the ensuing fight, whereupon, after the lapse of many years, Hnæf attacked Finn.⁹ There is not the least warrant for this

⁸ *Das altenglische Volksepos*, Kiel, 1883, p. 54.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

in the text. The event which he thinks the *Episode* relates is not referred to at all in the *Episode*. He proposed to place this event between lines 1145 and 1146, "grade an die stelle wo das Hengestlied abbricht: das fragment behandelt einen zweiten kampf in dem der mit Hengest geschlossene vertrag von Finn gebrochen wird." The *Episode* affords no ground for supposing that this "second fight" ever took place. Similarly, his explanation of the events between this and the final contest is spun out of thin air. "Dass Hengest im kampf fiel steht nirgends, wir müssen aber erraten dass er und andere seiner mannen nach dem fünften tage des kampfes fielen, worauf Guðlaf und Oslaf da die geschwächten Friesen es nicht mehr hindern konnten sich durchschlugen." After some metrical meditations he continues: "also müssen die genannten helden sich durchgeschlagen haben und in die heimat entwichen sein um mit neuen mannen wieder zu kommen. Gegen diese fiel dann Finn mit allen seinen mannen im letzten vernichtungskampfe." The danger of such methods of reconstructing an old legend are obvious. Möller's general interpretation of the relation of the Finnsburg story to early literature, his view that the Eotenas were the men of Hnæf, and that Hengest is the "battle-young king" of the *Fragment* have already been discussed here.¹⁰

¹⁰ Miss M. R. Clarke, following in part Kögel, assigns a different significance to the *Fragment*. Her arguments are not of much importance, but they may be briefly reviewed. She says: "It is difficult to see in this story (*i. e.*, the *Fragment*) either of the two fights alluded to in the Finn episode in *Beowulf*, as the circumstances under which it took place do not seem to apply exactly to either." (*Sidelights on Teutonic History during the Migration Period*, Cambridge, 1911, p. 179.) Her reasons for not identifying it with the second fight may be passed over, since we can agree fully with her on that point. But she also refuses to identify it with the

We may now turn to the last act of the drama, in which the Danes take final vengeance upon Finn and his men. For a time the ominous and bloodstained peace is observed; but the demands of wild justice can be satisfied only by another murderous combat, not less bloody, but more decisive than the heroic defence of the hall.

IV

THE VENGEANCE OF THE DANES

Leaving behind them the smoking brands of the bale-fire upon which the bodies of the slain warriors have been consumed, the Frisians return to their homes and their city (*hēa-burh*). There Hengest and his warriors stay the winter with Finn. But Hengest's thoughts dwell constantly upon his native land, although the storms sweeping over the wintry sea make return as yet impossible.¹ His chief desire is for the vengeance which a

first fight because "*Beo.* l. 1068, *thā hie se faer begeat* [sic!] does not seem to indicate that the first attack was made by the Frisians: nor does it appear from ll. 1071-2 that any treachery practised was on the part of Finn (*i. e.* if we take *Eotena* as referring to Hnæf and his followers)." It has already been shown that *Eotena* cannot refer to Hnæf and his followers, and also that *pā hie sē fēor begeat* may well refer, not to the first combat, but to the final struggle of all, in which the Danes took vengeance. Miss Clarke then proposes another solution for the *Fragment*. "It might very well be a description of part of the first struggle, and refer to the events immediately following on Hnæf's death, when we might suppose that the strangers took up as strong a position as possible in anticipation of a counter-attack. The *heatho-geong cyning*, *Finn*, l. 2, would then aptly enough denote Hengest," etc. This is much the same sort of interpretation as Möller's; there is no warrant in the text for any counter-attack.

¹I do not at all agree with Klaeber (*Anglia*, Beiblatt, Vol. xxii, p. 373), who defends the ms. reading *pēah-pe hē meakte* 1130. This

return to his native land will make possible. It is clear that upon his shoulders rests the responsibility for this duty.² As soon as spring comes and sea-travel becomes practicable, he leaves Finn's court. There is no reason to suppose that he "escapes" by stealth.³ It is far more

is directly contradicted by the context; the description of the stormy weather of winter and the statement that Hengest left when spring came. It is easy to understand the omission of the *ne*, which directly follows two words very like it in appearance,—*þe he*.

²Hengest has sometimes been held to be the brother of Hnæf. The alliteration of the names favors this theory, but it must be remembered that names beginning with H are very common. The evidence of the poem is against making him Hnæf's brother; he is called only *þeodnes þegn* (1085), and his men after the death of Hnæf are *þeodenlēase* (1103).

Mr. H. M. Chadwick (*Origins of the English Nation*, Cambridge, 1910, p. 52) attempts to identify him with the Hengest of the Saxon Conquest, the associate of Horsa. His reasons are these: Hengest was the follower of Hnæf, "who appears to have been a prince in the service of the Danish king Healfdene." The date of Healfdene's reign, reckoning from *Beowulf*, would be "before the middle of the fifth century," making the two Hengests contemporaries. Bede calls the tribe to which the Hengest of the Conquest belonged Iutae (Iuti), while "the tribe to which the other Hengest belonged is called in *Beowulf* *Eotena* (Gen. pl.), *Eotenum* (Dat. pl.)." The Hengest of the *Historia Brittonum* is said to have been driven into exile, and the scribe who wrote the genealogy of the *Historia* appears to have been familiar with the story of Finn, the son of Folwald. This identification of the two Hengests must be unhesitatingly rejected. Hnæf was not in the service of Healfdene; that notion rests on an emendation of the text which does violence to idiom (Bugge) and is today rejected by the best editors. (See above, p. 392, note 2). The tribe to which Hengest belongs is certainly not the Eotenas—a point which has already been discussed in detail. (See above, pp. 393 ff.). The minor points urged in support of the theory are not worth consideration if the main arguments fail. It should be said that Mr. Chadwick merely states he thinks his theory "more probable than not," and makes it conditional upon dating the invasion of Kent after 440.

³My colleague Professor H. M. Ayres called my attention to this point.

probable that he goes with Finn's consent. The Frisian king could hardly expect to keep as prisoner a chieftain whose men he had admitted to an equal standing in the state with his own (1087). We are not informed as to how many of his men, if any, accompanied him; but he can hardly have sailed back to Denmark all by himself. Had he tried to escape secretly, this would have meant to Finn hostility and rebellion, and the consequences to the Danish warriors still at his court would have been unpleasant. It would be quite natural for Hengest to ask to set forth upon a sea-voyage with the coming of spring. This was a common desire after the passing of the long, dull winter, as many sagas tell us. *The Seafarer*, too, reminds us how strong an appeal sea-voyaging in summer made to the Anglo-Saxons,—there was no worldly joy, says the poet, comparable to its strange fascination.⁴ Finn, then, could hardly refuse a request of this sort from Hengest, excepting by manifesting open hostility and suspicion. And Hengest had sworn deep oaths to keep the peace. But in Hengest's mind the duty of revenge outweighs that of keeping his pledge.

The passage which narrates the events which follow is the most difficult in the whole *Episode*. The narrative becomes highly allusive and laconic, and the text contains an unusual number of obscure expressions. Possibly the poet did not care to dwell upon the circumstances under which the Danes broke their solemn pledges. He hurries on as rapidly as he can to the consummation of the Danish vengeance. It is probably impossible to determine exactly the events leading up to this vengeance; but the alternatives and probabilities must be considered.

⁴For an analysis and interpretation of this lyric, see an article by the present writer, *Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, Vol. iv, p. 460 (1902).

The whole passage reads as follows:

- þā wæs winter scacen,
 fæger foldan bearm; fundode wrecca,
 gist of gearдум; hē tō gyren-wræce
 swiðor þōhte þonne tō sæ-lāde,
 1140 gif hē torn-gemōt þurhtēon mihte,
 þæt hē Eotena bearn inne gemunde.
 Swā hē ne-forwyrnde worold-rædenne,
 þonne him Hūnlāfing hilde-lēoman,
 billa sēlest, on bearm dyde.
 1145 þæs wæron mid Eotenum ege cūðe.
 Swylce ferhð-frecan Fin eft begeat
 sweord-bealo slīðen æt his selves hām,
 siððan grimne gripe Gūðlāf ond Ōslāf
 æfter sæ-siðe sorge mændon,
 1150 ætwiton wēana dæl; ne-meakte wæfre mōð
 forhabban in hreðre. þā wæs heal roden
 fēonda fēorum, swilce Fin slāgen,
 cyning on corðre, ond sēo cwēn numen.

The first point of importance ⁵ to consider is the meaning of *worold-rædenne* 1142. The suffix *-ræden* is regularly used to form abstracts ⁶; as the Bosworth-Toller *Lexicon* states, its force is much the same as that of the suffixes *-ship*, *-hood*, *-red*, denoting a state or a condition. A fairly

⁵ 1141 has given some trouble. The best reading seems to be that adopted by Grein, Nader, and Schücking: "worin er (in feindlicher Begegnung) der Kinder der Eoten gedächte (d. h. Rache an ihnen nähme)" as Schücking puts it. Sievers would alter *þæt* to *þær*, and render "wo, wie er wusste, die Helden sich befanden" (Paul and Braune, *Beiträge*, Vol. XII, p. 193). But emendation, even by an authority like Sievers, is to be rejected in favor of the MS. reading, if the latter can possibly be retained.

⁶ Das produktive ags. *ræden* . . . bildet feminine abstracta aus substantiven und zwar aus persönlichen substantiven, um das verhältnis der personen zu einander anzugeben: *frēond-ræden* 'freundschaft'; *fēond-*, *gefēr-*, *geþoft-*, *geþeod-*, *folc-*, *brōþor-ræden*. Daneben erscheinen sonstige aus substantiven abgeleitete abstracta wie *camp-ræden* 'kampf', *gecwid-*, *folc-*, *þing-*, *hiw-*, *gēbed-*, *heorð-ræden* usw. (Kluge, *Nominale Stammbildungslehre*, Halle, 1889, p. 81.)

close approximation to the literal significance of *worold-rādenne* would then be "what pertains to the world." The common connotation of *worold* in Anglo-Saxon compounds, as already pointed out in this connection by Mr. Clark Hall,⁷ is "secular affairs," as opposed to the religious life. The Abbess Hild advised Cædmon, as the Anglo-Saxon version of Bede tells us, *þæt hē woruldhād ānforlēte ond munuchād onfēnge*. In the *Cura Pastoralis*, *negotiis secularibus* is rendered by *woruldscipum*.⁸ It seems probable that the general meaning of *worold-rādenne* is similar. So 1142 appears to mean that Hengest "did not reject what pertained to the world, worldly business." But this figurative expression obviously admits of various interpretations. To me it seems very probable that it may mean "he did his worldly duty," that is, the duty of revenge. This seems somewhat closer to the literal meaning of the phrase than most of the other suggested renderings. Heinzel⁹ explained it as a paraphrase for "he met his fate," remarking that a medieval Latin writer might have expressed it "tributum naturae solvere non recusavit." Imelmann translates, "daher verweigerte er es dem Geschick nicht (sah darin seinen Wink und gehorchte ihm)." ¹⁰ Clark Hall suggests, "he did not run counter to the way of the world, *i. e.*, he fell into temptation, as most people would have done under the circumstances (*swā*)"—maintaining this to be "more likely than the too Oriental fatalism of 'he did not resist his fate.'" We must, however, be cautious about denying fatalism to a poem which proclaims *Gæð ā Wyrð swā hīo scel!* Schücking has proposed to connect the line with

⁷ *Modern Language Notes*, Vol. xxv, p. 113.

⁸ See Bosworth-Toller, sub *woruldscipe*.

⁹ *Anzeiger für deutsches Altertum*, Vol. x, p. 226.

¹⁰ *Deutsche Literaturzeitung*, Vol. xxx (1909), p. 998.

what precedes, and translates "ohne dass er das Weltgesetz versagte (d. h. bräche), d. h. ohne dass er seine Schwüre bräche."¹¹ So highly specialized a meaning for this vague phrase seems unlikely; we must ask ourselves if an Anglo-Saxon would have understood it. Moreover, as Imelmann has pointed out,¹² this interpretation is not very well supported by the context. Möller's emendation of *worold* to *worod*, and reading "so wehrte er dem willen der gefolgschaft nicht"¹³ should certainly be rejected. We beg the whole question of the interpretation of a difficult passage by altering a very common word like *worold* to *worod*, which occurs in *Beowulf* only in the forms *werod* or *weorod*, never *worod*. *Worod-rādenne* is not a compound found elsewhere in Anglo-Saxon poetry. The possibility of confusion between similar words, which Möller urged, does not make the substituted word preferable to the original reading, if this reading is of more frequent occurrence, and makes good sense.

The interpretation of *worold-rādenne* will depend to some extent upon the meaning assigned to the lines immediately following,

1143 þonne him Hūnlāfing hilde-lēoman,
 billa sēlest, on bearm dyde.

Critics have hitherto been divided between two general conceptions in explaining *on bearm dyde*: either "plunged into the breast"; or "laid upon his bosom" or "lap," as a present, or possibly as a military ceremony or "obscure

¹¹ Glossary sub *worold-rāden*.

¹² "Darf man Hengest so gewundene Gedankenpfade und dem Dichter so verstiegene Redeweise ernsthaft zutrauen? Hengest hat die Friedenseide mit beschworen, plant aber Friedensbruch; und da soll er sich einbilden, er könne um die Eide herumkommen, ohne sie zu brechen?" (*loc. cit.*).

¹³ *Altenglisches Volksepos*, p. 68.

rite of the *comitatus*." So far as the phraseology itself is concerned, either meaning seems defensible. The parallels, while on the whole rather favoring the second of these alternatives, are not conclusive evidence. The meaning of *dōn* varies, of course, in accordance with the particles used in connection with it; and *on* means both "in" and "on." *Dōn* with *on* can obviously mean "thrust in," as 2090, where Beowulf relates the desire of Grendel to thrust him into his pouch. But a parallel to the expression (*sweord*) *on bearm dōn*, if we take it to mean "slay," is not easy to find. A passage in the *Heliand* may be compared:

Tha muoder uuiepun

- 745 kindiungero qualm. Kara uuas an Bethleem,
hofno hludost: thoh man *im* iro hertun an tue
sniši midi suerdu, thoh ni mahta im io serora dad
uuerðan an thesaro uueroldi uuibon managon
brudion an Bethleem: gisahun iro barn biforan,
750 kindiunga man qualmu sueltan
blodaga an iru barmon.¹⁴

The phrase in the *Cotton Gnomes*, *sweord sceal on bearme* 25, is quite as obscure as the one now under consideration.

On bearm implies, in various passages, possession, as *him tō bearme cwōm mādðum-fæt mære* 2404 (cf. 1210 and 2775), and *on bearm dōn* may well mean "place in possession of." 2194 is often cited as a parallel. Hygelac presents Beowulf with the sword of Hrethel:

- bæt hē on Bīowulfes bearm ālegde,
2195 on him gesealde seofan þūsendo,
bold ond brego-stōl.

The parallel is not quite perfect, since *ālecgan* is a word of very definite meaning, and *dōn* is very indefinite. But

¹⁴ Ed. Sievers, Halle, 1878, p. 54.

it is clear that the rendering "lay upon the bosom or lap" receives considerable support from other passages; more, on the whole, than "plunge into the breast" can command. It does not seem safe to assume that this presentation of the sword had any ceremonial significance,¹⁵ it is sufficiently explained by the fact that for the execution of his duty of revenge Hengest might well have been presented with a supremely good weapon. The giver may have been some one with a grudge of his own against Finn; possibly a kinsman of a warrior whom Finn had slain. To this question we shall have occasion to revert later.

However much the details of the translation may vary, the general interpretation of this vexed passage will either be that Hengest carried out his scheme of revenge on being given a supremely good sword, or that he met his fate when this sword was thrust into his breast. In either case the transition of thought from the preceding lines is natural enough; perhaps it is a little more convincing with the first interpretation. Hengest, while his thoughts were fixed on vengeance, took the opportunity offered by the possession of a very excellent sword, and carried out his purposes; this sword was to kill—or had killed in the past—many of the Eotenas. "Its edges were known among the Eotenas" is the grimly ironical Germanic way of putting the matter. It is to be noted that the line can mean nothing else if we suppose that the passage just

¹⁵ For references to discussions of this matter, and of the meaning of the passage in the *Cotton Gnomes*, see Miss B. C. Williams, *Gnomic Poetry in Anglo-Saxon*, N. Y., 1914.

¹⁶ I think *fundode* here means "he hastened" (i. e., actually went) rather than "he was eager to go." This verb obviously oscillates in meaning between desire and performance, in other instances of its use. The following *gist of geardum* seems to favor the latter alternative, which is well enough supported by parallels. See Bosworth-Toller's *Lexicon*.

preceding tells how Hengest received the sword as a gift. For the line following narrates how Finn suffered sword-bale; how he was killed in his own home, and this is introduced by *swylce*. The regular function of *swylce* is to introduce a clause of content similar to the one preceding.¹⁷ If we do not assign the meaning "Eotenas were slain" to 1145, we must see in the lines preceding a reference to the death of Hengest. In that case, the sequence of thought introduced by *swā* 1142 will be: Hengest brooded over revenge and so he accepted his fate when it came. It is to be observed that it does not appear that Hengest slew Finn; Guthlaf and Oslaf are the ones who reproach him openly, in the midst of his men, not Hengest, who seems to have been the leader of the band. There is here a slight presumption in favor of the previous death of Hengest,—but only a slight one. The whole narrative is so allusive and broken that arguments of this sort must be accepted with great caution.

If we can definitely identify "Hunlafing" as a Dane, a choice between the two alternatives here presented will be much easier. Obviously, if Hunlafing were a Dane, he would not be likely to have been the slayer of Hengest, but it would have been natural for him to present Hengest

¹⁷ Cf. Schücking, *Die Grundzüge der Satzverknüpfung im Beowulf*, Halle, 1904, p. 84: *swylce*: Es leitet einen Satz ein, der einen dem vorhergehenden ähnlichen Inhalt hat. Und zwar werden vom selben Subjekt ähnliche Handlungen ausgesagt oder von ähnlichen Subjekten gleichartige Handlungen, oder es wird die Aehnlichkeit einer Situation mit einer andern angedeutet, u. s. w. Die Handlung in beiden Sätzen ist oft gleichzeitig. Der *swylce*- Satz zeigt sich in der Regel als für den Gang der Handlung wichtig; er dient selten bloss einem erweiternden Zusatz.—This point is also referred to by Clark Hall, *loc. cit.* The implication seems to be that the sword *later on* caused the death of Frisians, since this makes a better parallel to 1146 ff.

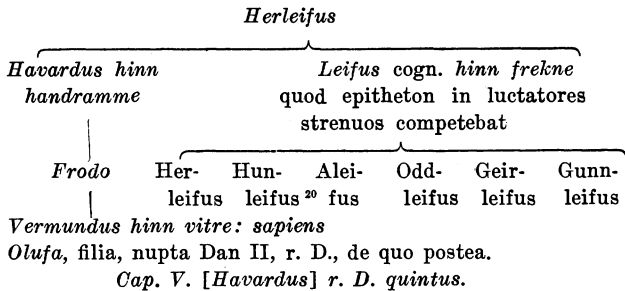
with a good trenchant sword. Most recent writers seem to agree¹⁸ that this identification has been made by the discovery of the passage in Arngrim Jonsson's version of the *Skjoldungasaga*, in which three Danish princes are mentioned, whose names are Hunleifus, Oddleifus, and Gunnleifus, and who may thus be identified with the Hunlaf(ing), Oslaf, and Guthlaf of the passage under discussion. There seems to be no reason to doubt that the Ordlaf and Guthlaf of *Fragment* 16 are the same persons as those mentioned in the *Episode*. It may be of some interest to reprint the whole passage in Arngrim's text, as it seems to have been more ardently discussed than examined.¹⁹

CAP. IIIII HERLEIFUS,
rex Daniæ quartus ordine.

Hæredem Frodo reliquit, avo cognominem, Leifum, qui cessante pace et tranquillitate publica et bellis ac rapinis recrudescens bellicæ fortitudine nomen mutuatus est, Herleifus dictus. Filios is multos reliquit, quorum duo præcipue commemorantur; quos etiam hic cum posteris aliquot propter sequentium rerum seriem in subjecta tabula recensuimus.

¹⁸ Clark Hall, for example, says: "It is a great relief to find that the personage of 1143 is a Dane, as it clears out of the road translations which must have been felt to be unsatisfactory." See also Chambers, *Widsith*, p. 201, note; Imelmann, *loc. cit.*; Huchon, *Revue Germanique*, Vol. III, p. 626; Sedgefield (second edition), p. 128; Schücking, p. 119.

¹⁹ Hunlafing cannot, of course, be the name of the sword, as Chadwick and Miss M. G. Clarke suppose (Chadwick, *Origin of the English Nation*, p. 52, note; Miss Clarke, *Sidelights on Teutonic History*, p. 183). The impossibility of this view was pointed out long ago by Möller, p. 68, and more recently by Huchon, *loc. cit.* Clark Hall called attention to the fact that Hunlafing could not be identical with the Hunleifus of Arngrim, as Chadwick thought. Hunlafing would be the *son* of Hunlaf, and consequently, if the equation with the list in Arngrim be accepted, the nephew of Guthlaf and Oslaf.



Successit patri Herleifo filius Havardus Handramme (sic appellantur, qui rem aliquam manu apprehensam pertinaciter retinent), de quo nihil ulterius memoriæ proditum est. Huic²¹ deinde frater Leifus, et illi filii sex ordine unus alteri: omnes in Selandia, Lethra regiam fixam habentes. De Aleifo quidem memoratur, quod nullum apparatus ab aulicis suis diversum habere voluerit. Hos patruelis Frodo et ex patruelis nepos Vermundus in regno secuti sunt. Quos omnes si prædictis Daniæ regibus ordine annumeremus, jam ad XV numero regem pervenimus.”²²

The supposed identification of the personages in *Beowulf* with the princes in Arngrim's chronicle is not quite as convincing as one could wish. Obviously, the coincidence is somewhat less striking when it is seen that the names of all the seven brothers end in *-leifus* (*lāf*). There seems to be nothing else in the chronicle at this point which suggests a connection with the story of Finn, but genealogies of the Danish kings of course differ greatly, and it may be that these seven brothers were inserted into the genealogy in a place where they did not belong, having been taken from some floating story or tradition. The number seven and the ending of all their names in *-leifus* create a suspicion that they are fictitious. But this is

²⁰ MS. Humleifus.

²¹ MS. Hinc.

²² For the text of the *Skjoldungasaga*, and discussion, see Axel Olrik, *Aarbøger for nordisk oldkyndighed og historie*, Vol. IX (Second Series), 1894, pp. 83 ff.

of no particular consequence; their presence in the chronicle makes it likely that tradition had in any case made them Danish heroes. The importance of the parallel depends almost wholly upon how great the probability is that the correspondences of the names are the result of chance. We must, I think, be exceedingly cautious about concluding that a proper name in Germanic story is necessarily, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, to be fastened upon the same hero or heroine. A large number of stories have been lost; it is perhaps to one of them that we should turn for the explanation of a proper name, rather than to one of the tales which has been preserved. Imelmann has called attention to the occurrence of the name *Hunlapus* in an early *Brut*, and his identification of this worthy with the Hunlaf(ing) of *Beowulf* seems to have been generally accepted.²³ But is not this somewhat questionable? Hunlaf, Oslaf (Ordlaf) and Guthlaf were names of common occurrence, as a glance at Searle's *Onomasticon*²⁴ will show. We have in the very story now under discussion an illustration of the frequency of the name Guthlaf. The Guthlaf whom we have just been considering is of course one of Hengest's companions. But the Guthlaf of *Fragment* 33, the father of Garulf, who is of the opposite party, cannot be the same person as the companion of Oslaf, unless we assume a tragic complication, kinsmen fighting on opposite sides, as in the passage from the Anglo-Saxon *Chronicle*. Möller tried to

²³ See *Deutsche Literaturzeitung*, 17 April, 1909: "In diebus illis, imperante Valentiniano imperatore vel principe, regnum barbarorum et germanorum exortum est. Surgentesque populi et naciones per totam europam consederunt. Hoc testantur gesta rudolphi et hunlapi, Unwini et Widie, horsi et hengisti, Waltef et hame, quorum quidam in Gallia, alii in britannia, ceteri uero in Germania armis et rebus bellicis claruerunt." *Brut*; Cott. Vesp. D iv. fol. 139 b.

²⁴ Cambridge (Eng.) University Press, 1897.

avoid this confusion by emending F. 33 to Guthulf, and Trautmann by emending to Guthere. But the plain truth is that we must expect to find a common name like Guthlaf borne by more than one person; it is only the modern scholar who tries to remove such repetitions.²⁵ Why should it be more disturbing than to find two people named Jacques in *As You Like It*, or two named Bardolph in *Henry IV*, 2? In Germanic story we have only to consider such names as Theodoric, which occurs in the *Widsith* referring to two different kings; Gudrun, the heroine of the Nibelung legend, and Gudrun, the daughter of Hetel and Hilde; Hagen, the murderer of Siegfried, and Hagen, the father of Hilde; or such recurring names as Sieglind, Sigebant, Ute, Hildeburg. How then can we feel sure that the obscure Danish prince in Arngrim, the hero in Beowulf, and the Hunlapus of the *Brut* are one and the same person? We have already seen the failure of the attempt to identify the Hengest of the *Brut* list with the Hengest of our poem;²⁶ is the case more certain with Hunlapus? ²⁷

While the evidential value of this passage in Arngrim seems much slighter than has generally been supposed, its weight falls on the side of the interpretation which we have already seen, on other grounds, to be somewhat more

²⁵ Since writing the above I see that Klaeber has expressed himself in *Englische Studien*, Vol. xxxix, p. 308, to the following effect: "Gūðere zu Gārulf's vater zu machen (35 nach Trautmann: Gūðheres [statt Gūðläfes] sunu), liegt kein genügender grund vor. Warum sollten denn nicht zwei personen denselben namen Gūðlaf haben? Auch in der schlacht bei Maldon treten zwei kämpfer namens Godric auf."

²⁶ See above, p. 415, note 2.

²⁷ These considerations apply also to Bugge's division of Hunlafing into Hun (a warrior) and Lafing (a sword), and his identification of Hun with the worthy mentioned in *Widsith* 33. Hun was a common name.

plausible,—that the “son of Hunlaf” presented Hengest with a sword, with which slaughter was done amongst the Frisians. But this part of the story remains in any case exceedingly obscure. If Hunlaf were the brother of Guthlaf and Oslaf, his son might present Hunlaf’s sword to the man who was to lead an attack against the family enemy. It would perhaps be venturing too far to suggest that Hunlaf had already fallen in the struggle at Finnsburg, and that the son of Hunlaf gave the sword to Hengest in order that his father might be avenged. Apparently Hengest had brought reinforcements from Denmark for the final struggle, although this is not stated in the text. It is strange, as already noted, that Hengest is not mentioned in connection with the death of Finn, but that “after the sea-journey” it is Guthlaf and Oslaf who cast old scores in the teeth of the Frisian king. Was Hengest already dead? These are questions which cannot be settled without further evidence; the main lines of the interpretation of 1142-1151 must still remain, after the most patient scrutiny, debatable. It is easy to construct ingenious hypotheses, and equally impossible to prove and to disprove their accuracy.

The rest of the tale is clear enough. In the bloody conflict at Finnsburg Finn is slain, and his queen carried off. The royal treasure is plundered, and everything of value which the Danes can find is loaded upon their ships. Then, with queen and treasure, their vengeance accomplished, they sail back to Denmark.

It may be well, in closing, to review briefly the main events of the story, adding as little as possible to the direct statements in the text. A certain amount of reading between the lines is necessary; it is for instance nowhere stated that Hildeburg is the queen of Finn, but there is no doubt that this is the case. Two serious omissions make

a well-rounded outline of the story impossible; we are not told the cause of the Frisian hostility which leads to the attack upon the Danes in the hall, nor the exact train of events leading up to the final struggle in which Finn is killed. Otherwise the general course of the story is sufficiently plain.

Finn, king of the Frisians, has married a Danish princess, Hildeburg, the daughter of Hoc. Hildeburg's brother Hnæf, accompanied by a band of Danish warriors, is staying at Finnsburg, the residence of Finn in Friesland. The Danes are quartered by themselves in a hall. For reasons with which we are not acquainted,—probably an old feud between Frisians and Danes, temporarily healed by the marriage of Hildeburg—Finn attacks his visitors as they are sleeping in the hall at night. The Danes make a brave and successful defence.

This defence is described in the *Finnsburg Fragment*. . . . Hnæf, probably with a companion, has been on the watch. There are sixty men inside the hall, of whom Hengest, Sigeferth, Eaha, Ordlaif, and Guthlaf are particularly mentioned. The attacking party is discovered by the gleam of moonlight upon their weapons or armor. Hnæf arouses his men, who immediately rush to the doors to prevent the enemy from entering. Garulf, an impetuous warrior of the Frisian party, is restrained by Guthere from at once attacking, but Garulf demands the name of the warrior defending the door, and receives from Sigeferth a defiant reply. Restraining himself no longer, Garulf, followed by the rest, rushes to the attack, and is the first to fall. For five days the struggle continues, but not a single Dane is killed. Then a chief of the attacking party withdraws. . . .

According to the *Episode*, Hnæf is killed, and the fight takes place in a single night. Hengest, a thane of Hnæf, assumes the leadership upon the death of his lord. All of Finn's thanes save a few have been slain, so that he can no longer continue the combat. The Frisians therefore offer terms of peace, agreeing, on their part, to give the Danes a hall of their own, to allow them equal power with the Frisians, and an equal share of treasure, when this is dispensed by Finn to his warriors. It is further agreed that the Frisians are to treat the Danes with great courtesy, not recalling the feud, nor taunting them with following the leader of the men who slew their lord. The Danish part of the bargain seems to consist solely in giving allegiance to Finn. These promises are duly confirmed by oath. A great funeral pyre is erected, upon which the dead warriors, chief among them Hnæf and a son of Queen Hildeburg, are burnt. Frisians and Danes then settle down for the winter.

At the coming of spring, when travel by sea becomes possible, Hengest, who has been nursing his desire for revenge, sails away. The subsequent events are exceedingly obscure. Apparently Hengest reaches Denmark and brings back reinforcements, and perhaps he is presented by "the son of Hunlaf," probably a Dane, with a supremely good sword. It is clear, however, that Finn is slain in his own home, after bitter reproaches have been uttered by Guthlaf and Oslaf. The Danes then plunder Finn's treasures, and sail back to Denmark with this booty and with Queen Hildeburg.

Hrothgar's minstrel was truly a man of tact and discretion. At a celebration in honor of the great Geat hero who had performed a feat which the Danes themselves had been unable to accomplish, there might well have been some who, like Unferth, would not be free from jealousy. Nothing could better have appeased wounded pride than this tale of Danish heroism and Danish vengeance. It was "a thing pleasing to hear in the hall" not alone because it was a great and moving story, but because it was admirably adapted to the particular occasion upon which it was recited. And it left nothing more to be told. After the final contest at Finnsburg, Danish revenge for past injury and insult was complete. The song comes to an end, and once more the revellers in Hrothgar's hall give themselves over to the pleasures of the feast.

WILLIAM WITHERLE LAWRENCE.

Since the above article was written, the admirable revision of the Wyatt text carried out by Dr. R. W. Chambers has been issued. In this edition (Cambridge University Press, 1914, p. 168) is noted the difficulty involved in supposing the Danes to have entered the service of the Frisian king, who was responsible for the death of their lord. This problem has been fully discussed above (pp. 403 ff.), and an explanation of it offered. Dr. Chambers holds a different view, to which I cannot assent. He believes "the Eotenas to be a distinct tribe, possibly identical with the *Ēote* or *Țte*, whom modern historians know as Jutes." While the Frisians were a great nation,

the Eotenas were, as he thinks, "a small and obscure clan," and "the Hōcingas or Healf-dene, though Danish, are not identical with the Danish nation proper." . . . "Finn, king of the Frisians, probably called a meeting of chieftains of subordinate clans, subject to or allied with him, such as we read of in the Norse sagas. At this meeting a night attack was made upon Hnæf and the Hocingas by Garulf, presumably prince of the Eotenas. It may be assumed that the supreme chief, Finn, had no share in this treachery, though he had to interfere in order to end the conflict, and to avenge his son, who had fallen in the struggle. . . . Such a succession of events would explain allusions in the poem not explicable on other hypotheses, and the action of the Danish survivors, in making peace with Finn, becomes less unintelligible if Finn had no hand in the original treachery, and interfered only to avenge a slain son." Dr. Chambers's argument should of course be read entire, but the preceding extract gives the most important points.

Serious objections to this argument immediately present themselves. There is no warrant in the text for assuming a meeting of allied clans called by Finn, nor for his vengeance for his slain son, nor for the statement that Garulf is "presumably prince of the Eotenas." Nothing is said in the *Fragment* about the nationality of the attackers. There is no reason to suppose they were not Frisians. The fact that Finn is not the first to attack the door certainly does not mean that they were not. And how is it possible to shift the blame for the attack from Finn to the Eotenas when Finn is called the *bana* of Hnæf? It does not matter whether he killed him with his own hands or not; he is clearly held responsible; the lines tell us it was regarded as disgraceful for the Danes to have to follow him, and the revenge at the end falls heavily upon him. The insult and hurt to Danish pride would be very little lessened by the assumption that some one else started the quarrel; and for this assumption, too, the lines give no warrant. Moreover, there is no evidence that the Eotenas were "a small and obscure clan." We have already seen that the name is probably, as Dr. Chambers admits may be the case, identical with that of the Jutes, and that probably the Frisians came to be called by this name in consequence of having settled in Jutish territory. (See above, p. 394). The names *Frýsan* and *Eotenas* seem to be used interchangeably in the *Episode*. Whether the *Hōcingas* or *Healfdene* are identical with the Danes proper or not is of no particular consequence for the present argument; it may be noted, however, that they are called Dene (1000) and their prince a Scylding (1108), and that on the usual interpretation of 1069 Half-Dane and Scylding were synonymous terms. It seems likely that the Half-Danes were one of the

allied clans making up the Danish people, and hence were treated as to all intents and purposes Danes by the poet. It is *to Denum* that the avengers return (1158). The complete union of the Danish people into a state took place in the eighth century; even *then* the divisions of this people were marked (cf. Bremer, Paul's *Grundriss*, Vol. III, p. 837). At the time when the present poem was put into shape we surely have to assume for the Danes and Frisians, not compact and unified political units, but groups of tribes held somewhat loosely together, and sometimes known by tribal names.

Altogether, then, I feel that Dr. Chambers's hypotheses are to be decidedly rejected, as lacking evidence in the text, and indeed as being contradicted by it.—W. W. L.